SPORTS / A18

An $800 bet on Pacquiao wins only $100

BUSINESS / B1

Gokongwei's Cebu Pacific to go public

BUSINESS / B2

Ayala holding firm posted net profit of P8.2B in 2009

ACROSS / A15

Mendoza goes to SC to fight his ouster

NEWS / A2

Palace: Poverty numbers could have been worse

Favila moves to BSP; Lapus goes to Trade

By Christine O. Avendaño

WITH LESS THAN FOUR MONTHS TO go before she steps down, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday completed what could be her last Cabinet reshuffle.

At separate events, President Arroyo announced yesterday her appointments of Trade Secretary Peter Favila to the Monetary Board, the policy-making body of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Ms Arroyo named Education Secretary Jesli Lapus as Favila's replacement at the

FAVILA A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Tuesday, March 9, 2010 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 23 / No. 91 P18

Danding's daughter backs Noy-Mar team

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE YOUNGEST daughter of business tycoon and political kingmaker Edwardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. is supporting the presidential candidacy of her cousin Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and the vice presi-

DANDING'S 4A

Bangit is new AFP chief

'Emperor's' appointment described as 'prize of loyalty'

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY Braving the scorching heat, protesters, mostly women, march on Malacañang to mark the global celebration of International Women's Day on Monday. They condemned the widespread poverty and alleged political repression in the Arroyo administration and challenged the presidential candidates to come up with a clear agenda for women.

By Christine O. Avendaño, Jocelyn R. Uy and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

LT. GEN. DELFIN BANGIT, A FORMER SPY MASTER called the "emperor," has been named chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in a move that drew a guarded welcome from soldiers and alarmed critics.

President Macapagal-Arroyo announced to reporters yesterday the appointment of Bangit, who headed the Presidential Security Group (PSG) during three coup attempts against her administration.

The Army chief will take over from Gen. Victor Ibrado in ceremonies at Camp Aguinaldo on Wednesday, when Ibrado turns 56, the mandatory retirement age in the 120,000-strong AFP.

A member of Philippine Military Academy "Maharlikan gan" Class of 1976 that adopted Ms Arroyo as honorary member, Bangit will serve for one year and five months before he himself retires.

"I would like to assure the people that I will do my very best to serve the interest of this nation and the Filipino people," Bangit said in a brief statement.

Bangit came under fire for throwing a lavish Christmas party in 2006 while he was head of the Intelligence Service of the AFP and used the code name "emperor." During the celebrations, Bangit's men cleared "Long live the emperor" on he throw pisao bills at the merrymakers.

BANGIT My very best for country

BANGIT A2

Asia-Pacific women have long way to go—UN

NEW DELHI—WOMEN IN THE Asia-Pacific region have little economic and political power, impacting economic growth prospects of developing nations, the United Nations said in a report released yesterday.

According to the UN Asia-Pacific Human Development Report to mark International Women's Day, the region ranked near the worst in the world on issues such as protecting women from violence or upholding their rights to property.

"The key message [of the report] is that to meet any development goals that a society sets, you need the full participation and involvement of women," Helen Clark, head of the UN Development Program (UNDP), said.

The report said lack of women's participation in the workforce was costing the region an estimated $89 billion annually.

While many women in the Asia-Pacific region had benefited from improved education, health and prosperity, they continued to face barriers to the same opportunities available to men, the report said.

Not only were rates of em-

ASIA-PACIFIC A4

How to get the poor out of Dante's inferno

By Fernando del Mundo
Chief, i-Team

(Each of a series)

RODOLFO SOCORRO CAME A long way from his picturesque coconut farm to see a vision turn into a nightmare a day after his arrival in the city.

A gang of blue-uniformed enforcers of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority assaulted his cartload of mangoes for violating a ban on vending on sidewalks.

"Why are you doing this to me," he cries, "I am not a thief."

The enforcers threw his cart onto their truck, along with his weighing scale, ignoring his pleas.

Before the vehicle sped away from the restricted area in front of the National Housing Authority at the Quezon Memorial Circle on a sunny Thursday morning, a reporter approached the gang leader and asked who he was.

"Santos," he barks. "Santos, Cristeron."

He may well be Inspector Javert declaring to Jean Val-

HOW TO GET A1

Condom debate brought to bishops' doorstep

By Leila B. Salaverria

THEY CAME BEARING CONDOMS.

Members of a workers group yesterday brought the condom debate to the doorstep of Catholic bishops, in a bid to convince the prelates that prophylactics protect the health of workers.

Carrying baskets with inflated condoms and flowers, members of Partido ng Manggagawa (PM) gathered yesterday at the

CONDOM A9

'Kicking with their wings,' RP kids seek fame in Africa

By Sunshine Lichauco de Leon
Contributor

WHEN MME TEEMAGID FOSter street children fly to Durban, South Africa, on Thursday, they will be doing more than crossing an ocean and representing their country in the first annual Dolanta Street Child World Cup (SCWC).

They will be trying out the new wings they have each discovered they possess, wings that have grown with each kick of a football.

The Philippines is one of eight countries chosen to take part in this unique 7-a-side foot-

KICKING A6

King cobra attacks alarm Davao folk

MATI CITY, DAVAO ORIENTAL—Is this ill Nino's wrath—with fangs?

Following multiple sightings of venomous snakes, one of which nearly attacked a child last week, villagers here killed two king cobras on Sunday and have begun to blame the drought for the serpents' unusual behavior.

At least 10 cobras, locally known as hamilon, have been spotted since the start of the month in Badas, a village that has acquired an unenviable rep-

KING A9

Bigelow makes history, beats ex-hubby's 'Avatar'

LOS ANGELES—KATHRYN Bigelow, director of the Iraq war drama "The Hurt Locker," hurdled her way into Oscar history books, topping her movie's Best Picture trophy with her win for directing, to become the first woman ever to earn that distinction.

The nerve-jangling movie about a US Army bomb disposal squad in Baghdad blew away its rivals and dominated the 82nd Academy Awards on Sunday (yesterday in Manila), scooping a

BIGELOW A8

JEFF Bridges accepts the Oscar for Best Performance by an Actor in "Crazy Heart."

KATHRYN Bigelow, center, holds her Oscars for Best Picture and Best Director for "The Hurt Locker" with Mace Alec Baldwin, right, and Steve Martin at the conclusion of the 82nd Academy Awards on Sunday in Hollywood.

SANDRA Bullock shows off her Oscar for Best Performance by an Actress in "The Blind Side."

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

PCSO 6/55 GRAND LOTTO
1 13 6 10 14 19
6/49 SUPER LOTTO
7 7 4 8 2 1
4D LOTTO
3 7 8 4
6/42 MEGA LOTTO
6 4 9
MEGALOTTO 6/45
11 18 21 22 25 32
P4,651,271.00

Palace: Poverty could've been worse

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY ADMITTED THAT the problem of poverty and hunger remained a challenge to the Arroyo administration but added that it could have been "even worse" had the government not acted to cushion the world financial crisis last year.

Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Gary Olivar was reacting to a statement by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, an economic adviser to the President, that the arch got rather in the past nine years of the Arroyo administration while self-rated hunger almost doubled from 11.4 percent in 2000 to 20.5 percent in 2009.

Olivar said this was "perhaps the only major area open to a view of good news about the President's economic legacy" but added that there were various ways that one could "put this trend in proper context."

In a statement he read at his regular press briefing, Olivar said, "It is possible—as numerous think-tanks—to have every growth with more income inequality—the latter being the source of most hunger" but not the other way around.

"In other words, had we not avoided the recession last year or grown more slowly than we actually did, said problems with hunger and inequity would likely be even worse," he said.

Olivar also pointed out that surveys on self-rated poverty had "gradually declined over the years from nearly 54 percent of households (around the end of the Marcos years, through a record 62 percent in 2003), at the start of the Arroyo term, and more sharply down to only 46 percent by the last quarter of 2009."

He said President Arroyo had implemented many programs to help the poor—from conditional cash transfers to cheaper rice and medicines to scholarships.

Olivar underscored Salceda's figures showing that only four, third of the P2.1 trillion in net profits of the top 100 companies was reinvested. "How much of the two-thirds of that amount that was pocketed as dividends "found their way through the family of the palsy wealthy into the lives of the needy and hungry among us?" Olivar said.

"These questions bear answering in the event many of these same businessmen get around complaining about how government isn't doing enough about poverty and hunger," he said.

Olivar continued: "Perhaps the most productive way to address this issue is to frame it as part of the continuing agenda for inclusive economic development—one that we hope the next administration will take up as a priority building upon the considerable investments already started by the current leadership."

Salceda had said "the single biggest lesson isn't necessarily" to allow overall economic growth to trickle down to the poor. However, he also lamented that the state was too weak to take stronger measures because of opposition charges that Ms Arroyo had directed in the last election.

Militants, lawyers, students march vs GMA app't of CJ

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

MILITANT PARTY-LIST GROUPS joined forces with lawyers and law students to "solidarity march" outside the Supreme Court in Manila yesterday to protest what they said was President Macapagal-Arroyo's plan to make a "midnight appointment" of the next Chief Justice.

The assembly called on the justices to uphold the "letter and spirit of the Constitution" which they said prohibited the President from making appointments beginning March 10, or two months before the May 10 presidential election, until the end of her term in June 30.

"The instant appointment of a midnight Chief Justice is an attempt by President Arroyo to extend her power and influence over institutions of government beyond her term of office, to the prejudice of the nation in general and the judiciary in particular," the protesters said in a signed statement they submitted to the high tribunal.

They condemned the President's "shameless abuse of power, blatant violation of the letter and spirit of the Constitution, breach of the public trust, and disregard for the independence and integrity of the judiciary."

They contended that Mr Arroyo would not appoint the next Chief Justice since the vacancy, when Chief Justice Reynato Puno retires on May 17, would occur within the period the ban on appointments was to effect.

Militants to argued the President could make the appointment, which is crucial because otherwise the judiciary would be left leaderless at a momentous time.

Organizations in the manifestor included various chapters of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), the Association of Law Students of the Philippines, National Union of People's Lawyers, Liberties and Alternative Legal Groups and party-list groups Bayan Muna, Akbayan, Anakpawis and Kabataan.

The marching block chimed with the words, "No To Midnight Appointments of Chief Justice" and "Hukumin Ipaglaban, Sumusan Katulad (Defend the Judiciary; Fight Blameworthiness)," some 100 people marched around the Supreme Court building on Padre Faura Street in Manila.

They held a program on the University of the Philippines Diliman campus which is beside the Supreme Court building, since the Supreme Court have rallies within its premises.

JBC submits other nominees

THE JUDICIAL AND BAR COUNCIL (JBC) yesterday submitted to Malacañang a shortlist of nominees for five vacant posts in the Office of the Ombudsman.

Nominated to replace retired Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon Victor Rendonilla were senior graft investigator Roger Domingo Soria, Assistant Ombudsman Medelina Bautista and retired Court of Appeals Associate Justice Monina Zenarosa.

Soria received seven votes while Jabinal and Zenarosa got five each.

Nominated to succeed retired Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio were Deputy Special Prosecutors Robert Kallos and Wendell Sulit and Zenarosa.

Kallos received the unanimous nod of all eight JBC members while Sulit and Zenarosa got four votes each.

Under the Constitution, President Macapagal-Arroyo can only appoint members of the judiciary from a shortlist of candidates officially endorsed by the JBC.

Newly appointed acting Justice Secretary and concurrent Solicitor General Alberto Agra participated in the voting as he joined last Monday's JBC meeting for the first time. Dona Pazzibugan

Civilians killed in clash, say cops

DARUGAYAN (ITTC)—CONTRARY to military claims, civilians, not Abu Sayyaf members, were killed and wounded in Sunday's military operation on Luminsan Island in Sirad, Sulu, local government and police officials told the Inquirer.

Sirad Mayor Arzhine Mohtar said the encounter that led to the death of seven villagers and the wounding of three others "was not about the Abu Sayyaf, and the police can attest to that."

"This is about a family feud or personal grudge and I just hope the military was not used," he said.

"The military responded to a tip without validating it with local officials or the police. They arrived on the island and went to a community (at 3 a.m.). Definitely everyone was surprised and in panic. There was shooting, but we don't know who started it," Mohtar said in a phone interview.

The mayor said he was taking steps to calm the situation. Otherwise, it might continue to snowballing (cipper). "We appealed to the military to release 13 persons, including Sirawag village chair Imron Maung, who were arrested after the clash.

Senior Supt. Joseph Ramac, police chief for Sulu, said four of the seven persons killed, two were women—Dadi Awak, 30, and her granddaughter Shang Asat, 18. The others were identified as Ibtisam Ad Asmi, 35, and Hesto Ijah, 18. Three of the bandits had yet to be identified.

Of the three wounded, two were women—Linat Parawaling, 70, and Mersa Hassing, 30.

"From our initial investigation, the victims' families would claim that they are not Abu Sayyaf...they were caught in the crossfire," Ramac told the Inquirer by phone.

Lt. Gen. Ben Dolorfino, chief of the military's Western Mindanao Command, had reported on Monday that Marines were on their way to end the last of Abu Sayyaf leader Albi Brahar when they clashed with the bandits. According to Dolorfino the first clash started at 6 a.m.

Mohtar said Luminsan island had a "history of feuds" or personal grudges. He did not say what those family feuds were about.

Aditi E. Rijwali, Inquirer Mindanao

Inquirer chair one of 9 inspiring women

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER (PDI) chair Marixi Prieto was among nine women honored yesterday for inspiring achievements in their respective fields.

President Macapagal-Arroyo led in handing out the Go Negosyo-Philippine Commission on Women "Inspiring Women of the Year" awards at the 2nd Go Negosyo Women Entrepreneurship Summit held at the World Trade Center in Pasay City.

Prieto was recognized for her print media advocacy and leadership as chair of the Inquirer.

Also cited were Leonardo Cimadio, head of Metro Manila Lean Gumla, for being a community entrepreneur; singer and entrepreneur Pilita Corales, for her musical artistry; Regina Hartigan, managing director of ABS-CBN Foundation, for successfully implementing initiatives that aim to improve the welfare of children.

Ms. Cecilia Muñoz, an English teacher at the Laguna Reformatory Community School, for embodying determination and passion for reading overcame; University of the Philippines economics professor Solita Monsod, for her relentless pursuit of sound socioeconomic policies; Esther Vital, president of Vital Publishing House Inc., for laying the foundation of Vital's textbook publishing division;

Rosalinda Wee, president of the Philippine Federation of Local Councils of Women, for democratizing entrepreneurship of persons in the underserved local ingredients and rural economy businesses; and Linda Legaspi, chief executive officer of WorldedBest International, for making quality educational accessible to the youth.Christine O. Avendaño

Pinoy seamen freed

TWO FILIPINO CREW of the Thai Union 3 seized last year by Somali pirates were released on Sunday off the coast of Somalia, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said yesterday.

The Thai-owned fishing vessel was hijacked on Oct. 20 in the Indian Ocean, along with the Filipinos, 23 Thai nationals and two Ghanaians manned the ship.

European Union Naval Force spokesperson Cmdr. John Andrew said the Somali pirates freed the Thai Union 3 for a ransom after holding it for more than four months.

The DFA said in a statement its Office of the Undersecretary for Migrant Workers Affairs (Owwa) coordinated with the manning agency, which reactivated the ship and its crew had been released.

Only three Filipinos are still being held by Somali pirates. —Jerome Aning, GF

Favila moves to BSP; Lapus goes to Trade

From page A1

Department of Trade and Industry Mona Valisno, the President's adviser on education, was appointed education secretary.

Before the announcements, the President posed for a picture in Malacañang with her Cabinet, including her new appointees who replaced several key Cabinet members who are running in the May elections.

"The President said she is pleased on working hard with her new Cabinet until the last day of her term and is equally committed to a smooth transition to a new Administration," said her deputy spokesperson Lucy Oliva, who released

on the media the official photo of Ms Arroyo and her Cabinet.

The new Cabinet members include Executive Secretary Leandro Mendoza (who remained transport secretary), Justice Secretary Alberto Agra, Budget Secretary Joaquin Lagonera, Agriculture Secretary Bernie Kondevilla and Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol. Director General Elena Bautista of the Presidential Management Staff and Director General Rogelio Pe-yuan of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.

The photo-opportunity was preceded by a farewell call by former Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

At the Negros forum at the World Trade Center in Pasay City, the President said she was appointing Favila to the Monetary Board so that "microcenter prize and small-enterprise loans" would continue to have a defender, after appointed Favila was present at the forum.

2nd to the monetary board

Favila is the second Cabinet member that Ms Arroyo appointed to the Monetary Board. In 2008, she appointed her press secretary and spokesperson, Ignacio Bunye as member of the board representing the private sector.

The President also announced Lapus' appointment as trade secretary at the Cagayan forum.

From the forum, Ms. Arroyo motored to San Sebastian College in Manila to attend CEO Citizenship advancement training graduation. There she announced that she was appointing Valisno as education secretary.

Valisno and Lapus were present at the graduation rites.

Business as usual

In a statement, Oliva assured the people that it was "business as usual at the Palace" following the latest Cabinet reshuffle.

"President Arroyo and her senior appointments will remain focused on these vital issues: healthcare, investing in education, creating jobs and building roads, among other things and will advance this governing agenda with energy" Oliva said.

He described most of the new Cabinet secretaries as "deeply experienced public servants, so the agenda is in no way to interrupted.

He said the policies and programs of the government would continue to be carried out "with vigor" by the President's Cabinet.

Asia-Pacific women have long way to go—UN

From page A1

payment, political representation and property ownership some of the lowest in the world, indicators related to health, literacy and vulnerability to poverty were also staggeringly low compared to men.

In many countries, few women earned their own income and the legal rights of men over land, housing, livestock, businesses and financial assets were biased—leaving women vulnerable with no control over their household finances.

The absence of a female voice in the Asia-Pacific's political systems was also a concern.

"Women politicians, particularly those with ties to the celebrities of poverty or association with marginalized groups, have been killed, raped or lured (abuse) Women for her challenging the status quo," the report said.

Women earn less

Women with children earned almost a third less than men and still faced two main career obstacles, a global trade union survey's report released yesterday in Brussels.

The persistent imbalance in household chores could limit women's careers, the study of the International Trade Union Confederation said. Women with kids earned on average, 68 percent of what men earned, while childless women made 96 percent of what men brought in, according to the report.

Few women in power

While women made up the backbone of production lines workers in China and had gained promotions such as secretaries, journalists and teaching, their numbers were small in the corridors of power—China's ruling Communist Party, and the giant corporations that headed the ears of the state-dominated economy.

The Philippines, however, was one of the few countries in the region where women had made significant gains in politics.

Data ILO of Chinese WPC parliamentarians were female, higher than the 17 percent of the UN Congress who were women. But China's parliament came under the Data Danish of the Communist Party, where rival power lay All nine members of the Party's top ruling body, the Politburo Standing Committee, were men.

Chinese women's economic power and wealth were still lower than men's. They owned 20 percent of businesses, compared to a world average of 30 percent, said Global Bureau of Women' president Irene Natividad.

No agenda for women

In Manila, militant organizations yesterday challenged presidential candidates to come up with a concrete and long-term agenda for women as they clamped to the Chino Roces Bridge in Quiapo by Mendiola to commemorate the centenary of International Women's Day.

Some 5,000 activists from the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) Asia Pacific, the Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Kababaihan sa Kanayunan (PKKK), the Bagong Kamalayan Pambansa Survivors' Collective, the Alliance of Progressive Labor (APL)-Women, Amnesty International and their affiliate groups marched from Bonifacio to Mendiola.

A second group, composed of 2,000 members of Gabriela, Bayanmuna, Migrante, the Anakbayan Pambansang Kalayan ng Kabuhayang Maglilingkod, the Federation of Church People's Response (FCPR), and other organizations held a separate program at the bridge.

In a statement, the CATW-Asia Pacific said not one of the presidential candidates had a concrete women's agenda.

The groups said women workers demanded full employment with dignity and equal opportunity; food sovereignty; sustainable livelihood and agrarian reform.

Marching in Iloilo

Braving the scorching heat, some 500 members of women's groups and militant organizations marched on the streets of Iloilo City yesterday afternoon.

The protesters led by Gabriela converged on Bonifacio Drive where a program was held.

Lucy Fracarros, Gabriela regional coordinator, said women should push candidates in the May 2010 elections to address women's concerns including health, employment, housing and violence on women.

Fearless females

Vice presidential candidate Sen. Loren Legarda, Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar and Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay Jr. attended the Women Entrepreneurship Summit of the Negosyo at the World Trade Center in Pasay City and gave advice to women on business and empowerment.

Legarda talked about her projects and accomplishments as senator. She had co-sponsored the Magna Carta for Women, as well as co-authored the Anti-Violence against Women and Children Law.

Villar spoke about the livelihood program she initiated for the women in Las Piñas City.

Fernando talked about the importance of family when both parents are working.

Legarda also spoke to two other women—Muntinlupa City Hall and at the Philippine Railroads at the boundary of Manila and Quezon City—where she repeatedly paid homage to women who have taken on huge responsibilities in positions of men in nation-building and sociopolitical and economic progress.

"We recognize women for their achievements, regardless of their race, religion, culture, or status. We look to the day as a milestone, once to unlock our development progress as women have made to remember our rights and our participation in the economic and political arenas," she said. *Reports from Reuters, Ali Jaymarie J. Andrade, Mike Cullejo and Michael Lim Ubac in Manila, and Xinhua's P. Borja Jr., Inquirer Visayas*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 9, 2010
3rd Week of Lent
Memorial of Rome

1st Readings: Dn 3:25, 34-43
Gospel: Mt 18:21-35

Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how many times must I forgive the offenses of my brother or sister? Seven times?" Jesus answered, "No, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven is like a king who decided to settle the accounts of his servants. Among the first was one who owed him ten thousand gold ingots. As the man could not repay the debt, the king commanded that he be sold as a slave with his wife, children and all his goods to payment. "The official threw himself at the feet of the king and said, 'Give me time, and I will pay you back everything.' The king took pity on him and released him; he even took care of the debt. "This official then left the king's presence and he met one of his companions who owed him a hundred denarii. At once he grabbed him by the throat and almost strangled him, shouting, 'Pay me what you owe!' The companion threw himself at his feet and asked him, 'Give me time, and I will pay everything.' The other did not agree, but went him in prison until he had paid his whole debt. The companions saw what happened. They were indignant and so they went and reported everything to their lord.... The lord summoned the first to him and said, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you asked me to. You should have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you.' And in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he had paid his whole debt.

Jesus added, "So will my heavenly Father do with you unless each of you sincerely forgives your brother or sister."

Commentary

"If my brother keeps sinning against me, how many times do I have to forgive him? Seven?"

The mercy of God is unlimited, eternal, unending.

If his heart is a fountain,
if in order to save the martyr we must sacrifice
that is the way
we are meant to show to others.
We are not meant to judge one another;
we are meant to love one another.

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Gordon: Link was ex-gov't exec

By Cathy Yamsuan

A FORMER GSIS official was the source of the secret testimony that Senator Richard Gordon, a government-run and -reimbursement of his campaign expenses—if he would withdraw from the presidential race.

Aside from the hint, the Bagumbayan party's standard-bearer refused to reveal any more details about the testimony suppressed. It went to executive session.

"I'll tell you this—the person is a high-ranking official, a former Cabinet secretary."

Gordon said his withdrawal from the presidential race was really not the main concern of the executive session on Orange Blue, the morning television program of GMA-7.

"Because I have a track record that does not include lying (while) Villar has a record of being a cloud king," Gordon replied.

"I was aware (that Villar stands as an office). In fact, I already told some-body in media (the executive's identity) in case something happens to me," Gordon said.

"I'll tell you this—the person is a high-ranking official, a former Cabinet secretary."

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'Kicking with their wings,' RP kids seek fame in Africa

From page A1:

ball competition. From March 15 to 23, the team will play against street children from India, South Africa, Tanzania, Brazil, Nicaragua, the United Kingdom and Ukraine.

The competition aims to give children a chance to show the world just how much they can achieve, given stable love and opportunity.

Perhaps most importantly, playing football has taught them to dream.

"When I'm on the street, I do not have any dreams for myself because I thought nothing would happen to my life," says 15-year-old Eddie Mae, the Philippine team captain. "But now, I've learned to dream big—to finish college and get a good job. I also want to teach football to street children as a sign of gratitude."

The 46 boys and three girls playing for the Philippines, aged 14-15, were chosen from 300 players representing different NGOs, charities and government shelters. Trials were held at "Grand United Stadium" last year, organized by team manager Ed Formoso.

The players were selected by the Philippine team, which played in the Homeless World Cup last year in Scotland.

All team members have lived on the streets at some point in their lives but eventually found a safe place to live, at Tahanan Sto Niño Street Children's Village and Boys on Big Rubotaan (BNB).

In these new homes, coach-child ratio was introduced to the game that has changed their lives.

Aside from playing football, the Durban squad will allow street children from around the world to unite in one voice. A conference where different team members will talk about the rights of street children aims to come up with a Street Child Manifesto, which will form the basis of an international campaign calling for street children's rights to be recognized.

The SCWC is organized by the Arise Trust, a British charity which uses sports, culture and the arts to uplift the lives of impoverished children.

Hard work, faith

The Philippine team would never have made it to South Africa without the hard work and faith of a group of organizers, coaches and house parents, and the financial support of its Principe and Mr. Cooky sponsors. Other corporate sponsors such as Deutsche Bank and Inbisko.

Team coach Jun Landagan has some full circle. A former street child himself, "Coach Jun" credits football for his new life. Now, he wants to offer other children the same opportunities life gave him.

The former Philippine national football player says: "When I was about 7, I slept on the streets and spent my days collecting trash to help my parents earn money. A priest in Don Bosco Boys Town saw me and suggested I attend some of the classes they were offering. He introduced me to football and it was through sport that I got an education and work."

Philippine team co-captain Cindy Bulbuc says: "Football has the example of how you can change your life. These children need heroes...people to look up to and say 'Wow, if he started as a ex-child soldier and is now coaching a team that represents the nation, then maybe I can do the same.'"

Father Bosky Evangelista, founder of Tahanan Sto Niño Street Children Village, explains why sports can help street children recover from their emotional scars. "They have very low self-esteem and they need a sense of life where they can prove themselves worthy of doing something."

"The most unusual activity for a child is to play but for the child to discover his/her passion, you must give him a good opportunity to play," Father Bosky adds. "Time for realities, for example, that he plays ball well, he starts to build his confidence. In other areas—academics, work, behavior..."

"It affects their life image," Father Bosky says. "They are no longer 'I was just a poor child, beggar, and we can walk care of me.' Working hard to earn a spot on the team and now being able to see the world outside has been a source of empowerment."

Value of teamwork

Sylas, the captain, describes how the club where she learned the world lead the team: "I felt underestimated but then, as time goes by I feel proud of myself. I will lead them by my good example. It's the key—if you are a leader, you can't lead unless you do this."

How has football changed Eddie's life?

"Football is a team sport. You cannot win without teamwork," she says. "But like in life, it is not easy to you—many people are involved. It also made me realize that both in life and in a football, it doesn't end when you fall. It is important to stand up again and go on."

She says football not only gives her joy, but "I have also learned to accept defeat."

Training with other street children has also given Eddie an opportunity to emotionally heal.

"I've learned to smile despite my bitter and painful past," she says. "I can see it in their eyes that they've also been through the same experiences [as I], or even worse, but still they can smile sincerely."

The team, organized under the auspices of The Henry V Moore Foundation, has grown from a more group of individuals into a family.

"A lot of them roamed our streets with the world and with their selves. Sport has taught them forgiveness. It's one mistake means a penalty, you have to forgive or you could lose," Burrows says.

The feeling of belonging to something "big" has helped him to clear fears has enabled some to come out of their shells.

"The team went to see bonsai, so they could learn a lot about South Africa," says Burrows. "He have one excellent player who always keeps to himself and seems aimless. When they came out of the theater, we saw him put his arm around a teammate. It brought tears to my eyes."

Father Bosky says: "I saw him start to touch the smallest child. Then in the school to play football. Have you seen a street child touching her puppy to play or walk? It was like that. This boy who had never had anyone care for him was communicating his feelings of concern."

Tahanan para sa Bata Sto Niño was the original team captain but due to an injury he is not going to South Africa. Still, he has remained involved with team training.

Philip has a message for children "don't think of yourself as the most down person and that you have nowhere to go [and] you have no future at all. There is always a better way to get out of that situation and move on. Don't lose hope, always seek a better life."

Father Bosky reminds his kids: "You know, while living on the streets, what is one like to feel 'invisible' or looked down upon by other people.

Philip's message to such people is: "Don't look at them as the low kind of people. They are the kind of children who strive hard every day in order to survive, to have a better life, a better future."

God's children

Erlito says there is something others should admire about street children.

"They are actually strong persons who never give up. Instead of pitying them down, give them courage for they need more of it because they are also God's children."

The Philippine does not have a strong tradition of playing football. In Durban, it will compete with countries where kicking a ball is part of their culture. The other players will be under the bigger size limits, and victory will not be easy.

No matter what the final score will be, the members of this team will come home winners. The pain that once was in their eyes has been replaced by a feeling of excitement their voices with achieving something never dreamed possible.

For the first time in their lives, they have felt love and learned to love. There is no stopping them now.

KICK OFF! Members of the Philippine team who will compete in the First Children Street Child World Cup in Durban, South Africa. From left, Jess Landagan (coach), Raymond Bono, Jayson Simangan, Lervlyn Cabanayan, Roberto Orlando Jr., John Robert, Erika Mae Inocencio (captain), Ludylyn Amps, Mario Titus and Jayson Simangan.

How to get the poor out of Dante's inferno

From page A1:

poor. "I administer the law—good, bad, or indifferent." Duterte cited this character from Liz Macuhbar sisters for one class of society in what a FILipino economist calls an "all-gumbo state" possessing "heavy capitalism."

The playing field is far from level in the country, regarded as one of the world's most corrupt.

"I may have climbed to the rest of many," says Duterte, who is breaking, may walking in his eyes. "I know I have done nothing wrong in the eyes of God."

In Socorro gathers his marriages, coffee workers take pity on him. They press pens little into his palms before walking away, shaking their heads. "Talatad, po," he says.

The 28-year-old father of two had left his Bondujan home, town in Northern Samar at the edge of the Pacific at 9 a.m. on Tuesday.

He had paid P600, about all the money he had, for fare on the Hard bus that took him to Sibuco on the northwestern tip of the island, then a ferry to Matalog in Zamboan. Finally searching jeeps in Quezon City before dawn the next day.

He was going to look for his wife, a caregiver in Period 4. He would join her and find a job, anything that would make life easier for the family with two kids in elementary school.

Promises, promises

The 1.5-hectare coconut farm, which he shares with 30 siblings, yields copra worth P3,000 every three months. Barely.

The price of copra is down, he says. Even in the best of times, when the harvest reached P5,000, the income was barely enough.

Northern Samar—dominant in borders smacking the country from the Pacific and a waterway for the communist New People's Army—gained entry into the list of the country's 10 poorest provinces in a survey conducted in 2006 by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB).

Eight—home to the 16 Quiapo-linked dive Sayyaf bandit group—is on top, with eight of 10 families classified as poor—formally a representation of the income inequality nationwide.

Socorro belongs to a group of Filipinos comprising a third of the population of over 90 million surviving on less than a dollar a day—the poverty threshold defined by the World Bank.

They are the object of courtship in political ads outracing prime time. TV as the nation heads towards the May 10 elections. Presidential aspirants promise them deliverance from Gloria's clutches.

The NSCB says that the number of poor people in the country increased from 23.8 million in 2006 to 27.6 million—33 percent of the population—in 2006.

The World Bank figures have says self-rated poverty went down from 50 percent in March 2001 to 31 percent in October 2009. But the number of poor families went up from 8.6 million to 8.8 million, or 4.9 million to 49 million, using an average of five per family.

Rural phenomenon

In both income-based and self-rated poverty measures, poverty has gone from bad to worse, even as the economy was growing. From 2003 to 2006, the average gross domestic product growth rate was 5.3 percent.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) says in a 2008 study that poverty is a "predominantly rural phenomenon" affecting 75 percent of the population's mostly farmers and fishermen.

ADB Manila that on decades-long problems in agriculture, where growth has not been sustained by a host of reasons—lack of investments, booming population.

A score of typhoons buffeted the country annually and likely to become more virulent as a result of worsening climate change. Storms "Ondoy" and "Pepeng" ravaged Luzon last year, as well as the prolonged dry spell wrought by El Niño now sweeping across large parts of the archipelago.

There is little room to wealth for the rural folk, mainly because the land reform of the 20-year agrarian reform program opposed by wealthy landowners.

The problem is compounded by inconsistencies, inadequate delivery of agricultural services, and weak governance as frustrations of Socorro Cruz-Angeles, a plaid with political problems spanked by "Hello Garci," the vote-rigging controversy that has confirmed her legitimacy.

Classic state failure

Many of the rural poor flee to urban areas, such as Metro Manila and Cebu and Davao cities, drawn by prospects of jobs and education.

They congregate in squalid slums that surround the dynamic Presidential Movies in the 1980s made Fisher Street—an area swelling but a treasure trove of the old elegantly.

ADB says that while poverty incidence has been gradually declining over the past 20 years, raising levels remain high.

"Poverty in the Philippines has persisted for almost three decades even as Malaysia and Thailand, which had similar economies in the Philippines in the 1960s, have almost eradicated it," the bank says.

Mom-poor become poor

In its assessment shared by Filipino academics and economists, ADB says that the Philippines has made little progress in easing the income gap between the rich and the poor, or quality employment.

This has constrained opportunities of the poor to escape deprivation and increased the vulnerability of the non-poor to become poor.

Growth has been confined to a few sectors, such as the export-oriented semiconductor industry, telecommunications, business process outsourcing, real estate, housing and retail trade.

Most of these are in the services sectors, which are being supported by remittances from overseas Filipino workers to their families in the Philippines' operating small businesses.

"The chain of industrial and manufacturing employment, which relatively stable and higher quality jobs are usually found, has declined over the years. The agriculture sector's share in employment also fell significantly, from 45.2 percent in 1980 to 13.4 percent in 1980 and down to 36.1 percent in 2007," ADB says.

"In most areas, soil erosion, coastal and marine system degradation, deforestation and habitat destruction are causing declines in agricultural productivity that threaten the livelihoods of the poor. In cities, there has been no pressure by the poor to congestion and pollution and air waste."

Far from millennium goal

In short, says Jess Edgardo Angara, the country is far from reaching the Millennium Development Goal of eradicating poverty and hunger in 2015. "The decline of poverty rates in the agricultural sector remains the primary cause," he says.

A position paper by University of the Philippines economics professor Dante B. Canlas, Benjamin E. Diokno and Felipe M. Medalla says that the country's ability of business for the next administration to to broaden the tax base. This would bring about higher revenues to reduce the budget deficit and finance public goods and social protection programs.

Arsenio M. Balisacan, director of the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture, offers "alternative pathways out of rural poverty" at a talk last year in Cebu.

Balisacan's prescriptions for rural economy should be diversified, expanding employment opportunities in non-farm activities; development of infrastructure to promote economic activities in remote areas; and targeting and logging administration investing in education and health care to enhance opportunities for migration to rapidly growing sectors; setting up market-friendly institutions; reducing risks of natural disasters; and ease of land use conversion to reflect market needs.

In 2003, the World Bank, in collaboration with the DSWD, initiated a P300-million poverty mitigation program patterned after Mexico's Oportunidades. Oportunidad and the highly successful Bolsa Familia, or family grant, in Brazil, where it was able to reduce poverty by 27 percent.

Conditional cash transfer

Here, the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program calls for injecting cash into the very poor areas to stimulate economic activity. Families within the poverty income level are provided P1,500 every month, on condition that children attend school consistently, students submitting to prenatal health care get a monthly stipend of P500.

Unlike the dole subsidy which critics say has been misused or gaming is alleged, in the CCT scheme, recipients are monitored by representatives of local government units and NGOs. There is a complementary grievance mechanism to check abuses.

Results are dubious. World Bank country representative is to appear that he hopes the government would divert pork barrel funds to the program.

The pilot project is now being rolled out in areas where there are schools and health clinics—otherwise, what is euphemistically called the supply side—presents implementation.

Escape to Dubai or spaceship

That is why people like Socorro would rather take other wise where idyllic rural setting for the Dubai-man-spaceship in the capital that he hasn't seen in his arrival.

Temporary accommodation had meant spending the night on the pavement at nearby Quezon Memorial Circle, a park inside the ramps east of a flood, Leo Sarita, 46, also from Bondujan.

Sarita, who came to the city two months ago, used the wooden contraption for his belongings by day and sleeping quarters at night.

The day the SIMON fence wreck, Sarita had to go to the bank to send money back home, income he had earned two months after he rented his bunk to a friend with a loan from his brother in law.

Sarita had asked Socorro to take his motorbike to his municipal slot in the corner.

The dusky Socorro, wearing a T-shirt and shorts, was armed with a cane knife and a machete in battery came. Several dozen residents, used to the crackdowns, scampered away, pushing carts laden with fruits and fresh vegetables.

Socorro was caught flat footed. "I didn't know it's not allowed," he says. He says he was no angry to disappoint his friend he wanted to fight back, but decided prudence was the better part of valor.

It's a sweltering summer hold in the city. Many more over across the nation among people caught in a social furnace that could give the incoming administration a nightmare more than it can handle.

Bayani: I'll wreck stalls if I have to

BAYANI FERNANDO WILL NOT SEE THE color of the illegal vendors who see stalls he ordered demolished when he was chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

In Oct. the Bagumbayan party's vice presidential candidate said he would do it again if it was required of him by the said administration.

"It's OK if they don't vote for me," he said in Filipino when interviewed on a morning television talk show yesterday.

"And in case I win, I would not hesitate to do it again, in case it's necessary," he added.

"I did what I had to do. I sensed scared of losing your votes. Leaders need to be strong and be able to defend their decisions. It's like a father who should not be scared of displeasing his son, for the sake of doing what's right," Fernando said.

He said that it was the responsibility of the MMDA to demolish illegal stalls put up on sidewalks, particularly outside public markets in Metro Manila.

"I'm very sure that doing that was a service to pedestrians who use those sidewalks. I have no doubt (the decisions) were beneficial," he said.

Bernardo said market vendors with legal permits and stalls supported his move. Hence, he is confident that he has their support.

One of Fernando's political sub-bosses a former illegal vendor thanking him for destroying her stall, thus setting her on the right path.

While only the legal vendors are allowed to sell in the markets, consumers can be assured the food supply is clean because the vendors are accountable for their goods, Fernando said.

"I think the people realize these things and are grateful for them," he said. —Gayle Romasanta

Philip Morris street has DTI exec fuming

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY (DTI) has ordered an investigation into the reported naming of a street in Tanauan City after the cigarette brand Philip Morris.

Zenaida Magbaya, DTI undersecretary for consumer welfare and trade regulation, said the naming by the Tanauan City council of a street after a cigarette brand could be a violation of the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003, which prohibits sales and advertisements featuring cigarettes.

Makoy said the DTI asked the Center for Health Development (CHD) IV to look into the matter after the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Alliance Philippines (FCAP) discovered the city council for renaming "a "product that has consistently contributed to 10 Filipinos deaths a day."

In her letter to the CHD, Magbaya said the "promoting and advertising of Republic Act No. 9211 (the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003) was within the Department of Health's administrative responsibility."

FCAP executive director Dr. Marcos Lauyan had complained that "putting up a street sign bearing the name of a cigarette brand was not only a violation of an existing law, but was utterly unmindful and insensitive of the health of Tanauan folk."

In February, the Tanauan City council passed a resolution naming a road in Barangay Bagtas from "Philip Morris" as a "way of expressing its appreciation for the tobacco company's support for the town."

Tanauan City hails Philip Morris Manufacturing Philippines Inc. as the country's biggest cigarette manufacturing facility in the country.

Lawyer Carmen Hewes, head of Philip Morris' public affairs office, said they had nothing to do with the Tanauan City council's move. It was an "initiative of the Tanauan City government," Hewes told the Inquirer. —Jerry E. Esplanada

President decides not to call special session

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo has decided not to call a special session of Congress to tackle the power crisis in Mindanao.

But the President did not say how the power measure would resolve the electricity crisis.

"Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes will take care of the details," was all she told reporters who interviewed her after she attended a CHR (Citizenship Advancement Training) graduation ceremony at San Sebastian College in Manila.

Ms Arroyo's remark drew alarm from Sen. Francis Escudero who issued a statement on Ms Arroyo's "possible bypassing Congress" on the matter.

"If she does so then that will make the contracts she entered into voidable," Escudero said in a text message.

"I warn possible suppliers of the electricity illegality of such contracts," the senator added.

The President said last week that she had adopted the recommendations of Reyes to declare a power crisis in Mindanao, which has been suffering from rotating blackouts due to low water levels at hydroelectric plants as a result of the dry spell.

Reyes had said that the Department of Energy was not asking for emergency powers for the moment but would want Congress to convene and file a proclamation to that effect. Power industry reform act to governors could get back into the business of generating and selling electricity.

The energy department particularly wants the state-owned National Power Corp. (Napocor) to lease modular generation sets to help provide 300 megawatts of electricity to Mindanao, threatening to bring up to several hours' power outages if no remedial measures are taken.

But congressional leaders said it would be impossible for them to convene a special session because lawmakers were busy campaigning for the May elections.

Congress presidential spokesperson Gary Olivar yesterday said the President was no longer calling a special session because Congress would not be able to enact it quickly.

Stop-gap measures

Palace officials were tight-lipped on how the government would be able to tackle the power crisis in Mindanao without Congress' help. Olivar said Reyes would be in "the best position" to answer queries on how to address the energy shortfall.

Even without special authority from Congress, the Department of Energy has begun exploring other stop-gap measures.

In a phone interview over the weekend, Reyes said these measures could be implemented without the need for Napocor to again generate and sell electricity.

Reyes said his department was preparing to implement a supply augmentation program in which big industrial firms or commercial enterprises that generate their own electricity would sell their excess capacity.

Besides peak hours, the industrial and commercial firms may also be asked to use their own generating sets instead of getting electricity from the Mindanao grid, for which they will be compensated.

Reyes earlier said the energy department had begun asking those setting up new power plants whether the projects could be fast-tracked.

Wire, we are continuing our information campaign and campaign on energy conservation and energy efficiency," Reyes added.

The energy chief, however, could not say whether those measures would be enough to ensure adequate power supply before the enhanced interruption takes effect on Wednesday and after the May 10 elections. With reports from Amy R. Remo

Bangit is new AFP chief

From page A1

The appointment of Bangit, senior aide-de-camp of Ms Arroyo when she was vice president, was described by detained Marine Col. Ariel Querubin as the "letter of loyalty."

"Any president would leave done the same," said Querubin, charged in connection with the February 2006 coup attempt, "I wish him good luck."

A group of soldiers calling themselves "Magdalo" that staged coup attempts in 2003 and 2007 said it hoped that Bangit would help ensure credible elections in May.

"Everyone is aware of the senior personnel's natural prerogative in this appointment," said Magdalo spokesperson Ashley Acedillo, a candidate for Cebu congressman.

"We are praying that the new chief of staff appreciates that the coming elections and the major role of the soldiery in securing our votes will be a lasting legacy for him, "he said.

Appointment alarming

In a statement, Liberal Party standard-bearer Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III said that: "many people are concerned that the appointment of Bangit to the command responsibility of the AFP in the coming elections is severely at risk with someone so closely tied to the President as (Bangit) now at the helm of the AFP."

Aquino hoped that Bangit "will rise beyond strong ne-bok (debt of gratitude) and perform his constitutional duty" to ensure a fair and peaceful election.

Aquino's running mate, Sen. Mar Roxas II, told reporters Bangit's appointment was shocking.

"A lot of senior officers were bypassed by the class and officers from this class control almost all of the major service commands. We have to be alert that any election will not prosper," said Roxas.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan, the LP campaign manager, challenged Bangit to prove his loyalty to the Constitution rather than the one who appointed him.

"All eyes are on him and we expect him as a professional soldier not to allow the AFP to be a tool in pray a very unpopular administration through unconstitutional and illegal means," said Pangilinan.

The appointment does not bode well for the morale of the AFP rank and file and it raises the specter of an electoral fiasco," said Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo. He noted that 186 Arroyo was making a congressional seat and was eyeing the House speakership. He added that Defense Secretary Norberto Gonzales was pushing for a greater role of the AFP in the May elections.

"He gets appointed reckon to serve the national interest or Gloria's interest—that remains to be seen by his performance, especially during this election period which is very crucial for the interest of the people," said Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. in a phone interview.

Fears of 'Hello Garci'

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a former AFP chief of staff, said that the people feared Bangit because of the "track record of the president in her attempts at the institutions and institutional processes to protect her political interests."

"Because of the nationwide fear of the 'Hello Garci' controversy, there is in the minds of the people that Bangit can be

again used to defeat the election process," he said in a phone interview, referring to claims Ms Arroyo stole the 2004 election, a charge she has denied.

"Given his closeness to President Arroyo, he must prove himself to not be pro-people and must be above suspicion," Sen. Francis Escudero said in a text message.

Lt. Col. Rustico Ramirez Jr., AFP spokesperson, appealed to critics to give Bangit a chance.

Ramirez said he was confident that Bangit would do a "good job."

"He is very professional," said Ramirez. He dismissed insinuations that Bangit would be used to manipulate the elections as "unfair."

Danding's daughter backs Noy-Mar team

From page A1

dential bid of his running mate Sen. Mar Roxas II.

Lisa Cojuangco-Cruz said she would not only support the "Noy-Mar ticket" as a personal decision but would also openly campaign for the Liberal Party standard-bearer.

"I am not a politician," she said. "But as a Filipino I am making a choice and the choice for May 10 is Noy-Mar," she told the reporters in an e-mail on Monday.

Cojuangco Cruz said she believed that the Aquino-Roxas tandem "is our best hope for a better Philippines."

'Honest government'

"I am not one to give you a complicated analysis of things. All we need is an honest, decent government and our hope for that rests on Noynoy and Mar," Cruz said.

She said she is campaigning in Negros Occidental, where her family owns farms and where she has spent many summers, and in Iloilo, where she has also lived.

She said she is hitting the campaign trail on Thursday in Iloilo where she will be joining Sen. Aquino's celebrity mates.

Lupao patient

Cruz, a lupus erythematosus patient, is known for her advocacy of raising awareness of the disease.

Diagnosed with the disease more than a decade ago, she currently spearheads The LUSA Project of the Philippine Rheumatology Educational Trust Foundation. LUSA stands for Lupus Inspired Advocacy.

Now based in Manila, Cojuangco Cruz described Noynoy as more than just a cousin. They share the same birthday and were born just seven hours apart on Feb. 8, 1960.

Noynoy's father, the slain-ex Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., was also her godfather, she said.

Lisa is married to Bl. Nick Cruz, one of the country's top cardiologists who is the director of the heart institute of St. Luke's Medical Center-Global City.

Mum on 'Gibo'

Cojuangco-Cruz, however, was tight-lipped on what she thought of her other cousin, Gilberto "Gibo" Teodoro, the standard-bearer of the administration party Lakas-Kampi-CMD.

Teodoro, the son of Danding's younger sister Marcelitas, had a falling out with Danding after the former joined the Nacionalista People's Coalition (NPC), the party founded by Danding, is by now of Lakas-Kampi.

Danding has yet to announce whom he will support in the May presidential election. She will, however, endorse only one candidate. Cojuangco, however, earlier said she would support "anybody but Gibo."

Emotions last been very rosy exist against Teodoro and about how Gibo had, purportedly "betrayed" Danding by leaving the NPC without first talking to Danding about it.

She also claimed that Danding had great plans for Teodoro but that the latter "left without even a word of goodbye."

Bigelow makes Oscars history, beats ex-hubby's 'Avatar'

From page B1

kind of an Oscars.

"It's the moment of a lifetime," said Bigelow, only the fourth woman ever to be honored for the Best Director award by Academy voters. "It's an emotional dream, to be in the company of my fellow nominees, such powerful filmmakers." She was up against James Cameron for "Sigourney Weaver for "Inglourious Basterds," Jason Reitman for "Up in the Air" and Lee Daniels for "Precious."

Bigelow dedicated her victory to "to the women and men in the military who risk their lives on a daily basis in Iraq and Afghanistan and around the world."

Her low-budget film had been locked in a duel with "Avatar," the $500-million science-fiction epic directed by her ex-husband James Cameron. Separated for 10 years, Cameron was named right behind Bigelow as the community and joined a standing ovation for her saying, "We, we" of her she was.

"Avatar" is the top-grossing movie of all time—with global receipts of $2.5 billion and counting. With just $12.8 million domestically (and $26 million from around the world), "The Hurt Locker" is reportedly the lowest-grossing film to win Best Picture in the modern era of digital box-office bookkeeping.

"The Hurt Locker" also won for writer Mark Boal the Oscar for Original Screenplay and claimed honors for Film Editing, Sound Editing and Mixing.

First, three winners

Backstage, Bigelow told reporters that she hoped she was only the first of many women directors in win an Oscar.

As in the Best Director race, first-time winners took all four acting prizes: Sandra Bullock as Best Actress for "The Blind Side"; Jeff Bridges as Best Actor for "Crazy Heart"; Mo'Nique as Supporting Actress for "Precious"; and Austria's Christoph Waltz as Supporting Actor for "Inglourious Basterds."

The Oscar marks a career peak for Bridges, a beloved Hollywood veteran who had been nominated four times in the previous 36 years without winning. In "Crazy Heart," Bridges plays an alcoholic country singer trying to clean up his act.

Holding his Oscar aloft, Bridges declared his late parents, actor Lloyd Bridges and poet Dorothy Bridges: "Thank you. Mom and Dad, for turning me on to such a groovy profession." Earlier in the program, he had walked up with tears after a meeting with on from Michelle Pfeiffer.

Mo'Nique also wept as for Original Song with its theme tune, "The Weary Kind," by Ryan Bingham and T Bone Burnett.

America's Sweetheart

Her award wraps up a wild year for Bullock, who had been called "America's Sweetheart" for her screen roles and "The Blind Side" and "The Proposal," but also as a flop with "All About Steve," which had earned her the razzes. Several nights at the annual Razzie awards ceremony—who, she joked, is "such a good loser."

Bullock had never before been nominated. An industry darling, she was once dubbed "America's Sweetheart" for the romantic comedies that earned her many fans early in her career. For "The Blind Side," however, she took the part of a real-life, strong-willed woman who takes a homeless youth off the street and makes him a college football success.

She held back tears when thanking her own mother, Helga, a performance coach who died of cancer in 2005, telling reporters backstage that "I'm reminded of her every day in my own life. I'm reminding her daughters," she said. "That there's no cure, no religion, no close system, no color, no thing, no external information, that makes us better than anyone else."

Startling turns

The supporting acting wins, each capped remarkable years, Mo'Nique startling fans with dramatic depths previously unsuspected in the actress known for lowbrow comedy and Waltz leaping to fame with his chilling performance as Hans Landa.

"I would like to thank the academy for showing that it can be about the performance and not the politics," said Mo'Nique, who plays the heartless, abusive mother of our filmmaker hero in the Harlem drama "Precious." Based on the novel "Push by Sapphire."

Mo'Nique added her participants in the first black women to win an Oscar, Hattie McDaniel, Best Supporting Actress in 1939 for "Gone With the Wind."

The also thanked Oprah Winfrey and Tyler Perry, who signed on as executive producers to spread the word on "Precious" after it premiered at last year's Sundance Film Festival.

"Precious" also won the adapted screenplay: Oscar for Geoffrey Fletcher, to become the first African-American to claim that honor.

Mo'Nique's triumph made her only the fifth black actress in history to win an Oscar after Hattie McDaniel, Whoopi Goldberg, Halle Berry and Louise Fletcher.

Though a veteran stage and TV actor in Europe, Waltz had been a relative unknown in Hollywood before Quentin Tarantino cast him as the pranking, ruthless Jew hunter Hans Landa in his World War II saga.

The actor gave one of the best ever Oscar acceptance speeches. Speaking in his Austrian-accented mother of tongue, his fearless exploits took him deep across and brought a in with flying colors, and that's why I'm here," Waltz said. "This is your welcoming embrace, and there's an area I can ever thank you enough, but I can state right now—thank you."

But his was the only night that Tarantino's "Basterds" claimed after being the second-most nominated movie with eight nods.

Biggest in history

Cameron's phenomenally successful blockbuster—the highest-grossing film in history with more than $2.3 billion in earnings and counting—this ended the night with three Oscars, mostly in technical categories—Visual Effects, Cinematography and Art Direction.

"Avatar" and "Hurt Locker" had some teammates each.

Producer punished

Bigelow follows collected the Best Picture Oscar, the first joined by her fellow "Hurt Locker" producer Boal and Greg Shapiro. A fourth producer—filmmaker Nathan Ostarter, a key money man behind the film—was barred from attending as punishment for violating union rules by sending e-mails to Oscar voters urging them to back "The Hurt Locker" over "Avatar."

Oscar overseers said Ostarter still will receive his best-picture Oscar, but at a later time.

Smash hits

The Best Picture category was loaded with smash hits. "Avatar" at $720 million domestically and climbing, and the Pixar animated blockbuster "Up" and "The Blind Side" topping $200 million.

"Up," a family film and one of the best-reviewed movies of 2009, was two Oscars—Best Animated Movie and Best Original Score with its tune of an elderly man who ties balloons to his house and flies off on an adventure with a young boy.

"Up" did 3 Oscars that making a flip-book set of the third-grade math book would look to like," said "Up" director Pete Docter.

Perfectly scripted

It was a perfectly scripted night. Organizers had promised a fast-paced show with lots of surprises in the production. Hollywood and Show Martin. And after an old-style musical number by Neil Patrick Harris with showgirls and men in tuxedos and tails, Baldwin and Martin put on a mind-up routine poking fun at the movies' big moments.

"There's that damn Meryl Streep," Martin said.

"No Steve, that's Diane Keaton," Baldwin came back. Reports from AP Reuters, AFP

Condom debate brought before CBCP

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Petty interests

EDITORIAL

ELECTION COMMISSIONER RENE SARMIENTO has urged critics of the candidacies of Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo and Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes for party list to file cases with the Commission on Elections. "There are many nominees. And [for us to act] motu propio, honestly, we need information [and] assistance," he said. He added that with 187 accredited party-list groups, each submitting at least five nominees, the poll body could not nominate all of the names, all at once.

But to accredit party-list groups without reviewing their credentials or nominees, isn't that incompetence? And because of this, professional politicians, "trapos," and members extricated from the military now seek to enter Congress through the back door by being nominees of party-list groups. The President's own son, Representative Arroyo, has talked about being a party-list nominee because his mother is accepting his son as representative of his district in Pampanga. Reyes and former Rep. Prospero Pichay also plan to run as party-list nominees.

Obviously there's something wrong in a system where groups that are purportedly marginalized are accredited and made to campaign for Congress, ahead of identifying their nominees. The system has resulted in the co-optation of the party list by politicians and big-business groups. It may also have given unscrupulous individuals who have managed to have their party accredited the opportunity to sell their nominations to the highest bidders.

For example, isn't it fishy that some time after Arroyo retired his plan to run for the party list, he was quickly drafted by Ang Galing Pinoy (AGP), a party purportedly representing tricycle drivers and small transport workers? How is somebody who has never driven a passenger tricycle or operated one (the earnings from it are peanuts for him), much less commuted in one (he drives around in a convoy of luxury cars laden with hefty security men), and he now represents tricycle drivers? He could have much to his old congressional district, except that he has to give it up since many, after holding on to the presidency for six years and serious questions about her legitimacy, now want to run for Congress. If he were seeking the title of Miss Dumbo Sun, Representative Arroyo would have no problem. But he is running for Tricycle Driver of the Nation, a hard sell if there was one! Having inherited the body, built and girth of the First Gentleman, he's much too voluptuous to be convincing as a passenger while driver. He could be driving his tricycle with a permanent flat tire.

Meanwhile, Reyes is the consiglere of the United Transport Koalisyon (1-UTAK), a coalition of jeepney drivers and operators. The connection between the energy secretary and the jeepney sector is tenuous at best; it's that sort of arrangement one sees between average bedridden or between political prostitutes. If you ask us, Reyes should have been the consiglere of AGP, which claims to represent small transport workers and security guards. (Again what's the connection?) Perhaps Blue guards go to rural fiestas work on crowders!) Since Reyes is a former chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, he should perhaps be the champion of security guards. But better still, he should leave government where he's been on taxpayers' payroll since his early adulthood and follow the example of some former military officers who, after making a wreck of public safety and order through their incompetence and corruption, retire and go to the security business or cash in on the mess they have left.

The fact that Arroyo and Reyes are nominees of party-list groups whose concerns they hardly represent should not only compel the Comelec to refuse their candidacies; it should also give the poll body the reason to purge the groups themselves. The names of the groups—Ang Galing and 1-Utak—are themselves sensationally empty and hardly inform the electorate of their advocacies. These groups obviously chose such inflated names in order to be on top of the list, ahead of the others, and improve their chances of election, an infirmation of their narrowness, totally unsophisticated intentions. The Comelec should not play blind. political prostitutes and petty interests have made a mockery of the party list.

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Evasive candidates

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

YOUR LIVES ARE MOSTLY A CONSTANT EXPANSE of nameless, "T.B. Illiterates pushed out, London scholars, one candidates think and answer.

Candidate Joseph Estrada reworks his story to mythology until he is reborn to Malacañang. "They stole my throne," he is convinced. He will not learned, from downfall and detention, that the president is a servant, not a sovereign. He always will be the subject, never the master.

Candidate Manuel "Mar-Roxas made the U.S. road budgetary issue. "Partisan politics," he realizes. Are his supposed tips on Malacañang rooms enough? No current Palace inquirer, will he provide an "Eyes-right ballroom" for President Macapagal-Arroyo when she launches presidential immunity? Other issues that question arise.

Candidate Gilbert Teodoro charge all queries on "Hilarious." Is he being led willfully to the slaughterhouse? He's not a naive youth. Gilbert has been there. He'd do well to ask about Malacañang embarrassment, thank you. They use a "Line of duty," the current cry.

Candidate Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo rarely appears in public with the First Gentleman. She even in Pampanga, where she's running for Congress. Out of sight, out of mind? The Palace, meanwhile, churns out ads on her "legacy of achievements."

These claims don't measure credibility of those ads. That's also not for what they reveal.

There's one "achievement." The 2009/2010 draft's been shoved under the rug so far. Peter dent always ensured more local government units (LGUs) than President Fidel V. Ramos and Estrada combined.

Ramos stopped at seven in 1998. He oversaw then 76 provinces, 66 cities, 1,548 towns and almost 42,000 barangays. Mergin Penny boosted out Estrada in 2001. The number of provinces remained constant. Towns increased to 1,711. So did barangays, to 41,944.

Under Mr. Arroyo, LGUs "doubled." Mathematics." From January 2001 to December 2009, she added three provinces, 22 cities, 17 towns and 713 barangays.

So why do these LGUs get the "First Grade" most treatment"—out of sight, out of mind?

Viewpoint

Juan L. Mercado

"Under President Arroyo's watch, [these LGUs] were created or converted shortly before election periods," former Finance Undersecretary Milwida Guevara points out in "The Fiscal Decentralization Process in the Philippines: Lessons from Experience."

Before the 2001 senatorial and local campaign started, 14 towns were elevated to city status. Zamboanga Sibugay was carved out of Zamboanga del Sur Province.

During the 6 months, all new LGUs in 2004 were created before the presidential elections; two cities, two municipalities and 16 barangays.

Three months before the 2007 national campaign started, Shariff Kabunsuan was sliced off from Maguindanao. Datuger Ismael was also spun off from his own del Norte, but the Supreme Court knocked it back into being a town, since it doesn't have the requisite population.

That same year, 18 towns were converted into cities. Also created were 13 towns, 52 barangays and four cities.

The new LGUs are concentrated in Mindanao, mostly in Maguindanao province "do have eight municipalities and 11 barangays were created in the vast partisan conflict-ridden province," the Guevara study notes. They accommodated members of Gov. Andal Ampatuan's clan. In return, the Ampatuans detailed Mr. Arroyo 150,000 votes over Benigno Aquino III's 3. They also delivered 1,824 votes for the administration's senatorial slate.

There were 97 persons massacred last Nov. 23 in Ampatuan town. Among the victims, 32 were journalists. (The body of Maitland Mangudadatu's wife, Genalyn, is still missing.)

Thus, the number of media workers killed in the line of duty since 1986 bolted from 82 to 132, according to the Center for Media Freedom. The Philippines eventual became the "most dangerous country in the world for journalists."

Among those charged for the slaughter are Andal Ampatuan Jr., Datu Zaldy "Zaf" Ampatuan, Datu Akmad "Ac" Ampatuan Sr., Datu Sajid Ampatuan, Datu Anwar Ampatuan, plus 196 others. They are the President's cronies also.

Political influence is also about money. At local government level, this entails around Internal Revenue Allotments. The size of IRAs proper ional population head counts.

Census returns in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao are overturned, demographers have cautioned. In Maguindanao, there were more 116 year-olds than in any other region. Similarly, the Philippine Center for Investigative reports.

Stated for the ARMM, all regions reported declines in population. Thus, IRAs for ARMM provinces soared to only 0.3 billion to 0.7 billion.

There's little doubt, as a candidate, "Sen Ino[illegible] and IRAs or their personal cheeseboxes. Mothy Gonzalez Yuy Gee, Manny Piñol noted. The Commission on Audit has yet to report on Maguindanao's IRA spin-pot.

The "worst of rush" also favors the number of LGUs that rose in 1998 to 1,716 by 2009. Ilres pective in "happiest of growth." Instead, they dig into the IRA pool, reducing the share of others.

Mr Arroyo allowed 15 bills creating new cities to lapse into law. The 16 didn't meet the Republic Act 9009 criterion of P100 million in income. The Supreme Court struck this down in "a final decision that had become executive."

The Good, however, Ilay Dapplod. It could "reconsider a final decision." The 16 are back. But not their IRAs—for now.

President Aquino was badgered to reconsider this vote sealed to the curse. "Good senses, senyor." he snapped. What I have written, I have written.

Tell that to some of our pensioners.

(Email: jasmercado@gmail.com)

The interpretation of dreams

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

AT TIME MARKS' FELLAH ISN'T SO BAD[illegible] stalling Secretary Aquino by only seven points in the last Pulse Asia survey. Could Jesse have written Indolfo's thought bubble? And with his last redeemed again. It's not because Aquino has gone up, it's only because Villar has gone down by eight points. Aquino is not even down by one.

The surprises without, of course, is that Villar got rejected by so many. But what really floors that sense? "Corruption." I mention, in a fairly obtained idea for us. We have a concept of values in the sense of a sensitive or pickpocket or bank robber playing those roles. And we have a concept of crimes in the sense of public officials being rapists or ravaging or stealing personal, other round everything. But we don't seriously expect public officials to live off their salaries only, or indeed to not try to recoup their campaigns "investment," by what exactly about the U.S. bank bailout?

Personally, I think it was a hybrid of the second and third set of values, of "robbery," of being a little too greedy, which connected visibly with his pitch of being from the poor and identifying with the poor. It shocked that pitch and chipped off many of the points he might have built up from the middle class and the upper class. And that's why Villar ran out as one of losing devices, you won't see him in the entire bailout years of poverty, you will see him as the neighborhood rat man out to freeze you of what little you have left.

That and the debate and finale: those, specifically the way nothing him "strong" for refusing to appear in the Senate, in this robin-hoody macho culture, being called down by a woman, whatever the particulars of Jinnky are, can strike a nasty nerve.

Villar naturally does not refer to CA but to other Aquino's [illegible] to Edsa, where an attorney fell a couple of weeks ago. That led, stood Aquino's stock, he said, they're still much people ill by Cory Aquino himself in other. It is his reasoned candidacy, just as shaky the regularity with which he says nothing to the media.

In fact, though Edsa was celebrated, it was not celebrated with the intensity its followers expected and its opponents dreaded. Certainly the Aquino camp did not have on the streets leading up to Edsa, or claims to be would in person. And though Aquino has demonstrably inked his partial in media or learn to compared to the last four months, he has not faked his ratings. there've gotten down by a point. That suggests that the Edsa celebration, such as it was, and Aquino's announcement on the public rest have served only as a brake to arrest his slide, not to get him up and going.

Whatever slide downward continues, it will be be able to retaliate the C-5 issue, and come roaring back on the wings of his billions? Or will Aquino have reached his lowest point and can't dunking up?

Reprisal, on a lot of things. But I suspect Aquino's campaign will have to do it with it.

It hasn't been done thus far. Which owes to his camp's curious reading of the last few survey results. Those results say that by January this year, Jeat was no longer the main source for taking the presidency, rapid surge to Jadetta not seen. This was an advantage. Villar spending billions to edit that down beans the point about head to the race was the decision and he sacrifice over. As the remaining racist, Aquino would do well to latch on to it too.

In fact that conclusion seems made more easy if at the same time that Villar was pursuing his strategy of [illegible] over the past months, Aquino was pursuing his strategy of Edsa two—and it simply turned out that Villar made the more powerful choice. Where what happened was that Aquino ran with the strategy of his mother. That is more call by the Palace Anti Epidemic Villar surveyed Aquino in media five to one, a [illegible] thing given that the media are friendly to Aquino. In the last times that Aquino landed on the front page from December to January only once did he get to do so two more times, one of which he did or said, which was the position he took against GMA appointing the same chief justice. The one never things each of him or about him.

That is a declining choice, in consequence, the media. That "don't get out" was what allowed Villar's message or framework to come surging to. Volume naturally invites occupation. Villar's message of Kabayan because the dominant message out by being the more powerful message but by media default.

Aquino's message to "BBL Aquino continue to fight Villar is his turf—and Erap was whose time honored, or crossover, message is "Erap para sa mahirap" and who was on posts—that Kabayan became the issue—or self to do it? The first question hasn't clearly had its own get gone, other than the indirect one of losing him, "only" one point. The second has more possibilities couldn't to raise, it was not that the Edsa message didn't work, it was that it was never pursued. Just were required more effort—[illegible] another message. Something, or discourse that has become dominant even by default always.

The irony of it is that Edsa has the sharpest message of all about Kabayan, one the public has been able to relate to instantly. Which is borne out by all the surveys we've had over the last nine years. The one source of the people's kabayan is Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Kabayan is more than [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and

Master Joseph Chau's sound advice

Political Tidbits

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE INCREASING ELECTION VIOLENCE in parts of the country as well as the hot exchanges of charges among various candidates reminds me of the advice Master Joseph Chau gave at the press conference each last month sponsored by the Manila Oriental Hotel to celebrate the Year of the Golden Tiger. Every year, Mandarin's amiable PR manager Christine Ouidaleon invites the media to the Oriental New Year festivities, marked by very special cuisine and entertainment. This year, I'm sorry to tell you, if Master Joseph would make predictions for the national elections. He did not, but instead he gave an important and unusual advice: We, Filipinos should not take our politics too seriously.

* * *

The recent coalition between the Nacionalista Party of Manny Villar and the NPC may indeed help strengthen his candidacy as it brings some heavyweights in the NPC to his camp. It could also bring for the coalition the dominant senatorial party status, that would entitle it to a spot on the electronic returns and members during the canvassing. But it may also bring more trouble to the Villar camp. Like the Lakas-Kampi camp of NPC founder Eduardo Cojuangco, Cayetano said he talked but called an "unsubstantial" coalition forged by NPC chair Beatrice De Jesus (NPC president Prospero Nograles is also a member of the NPC members are being opposed by MPs in various party nationwide. The NPC supports headed for a breakup into several factions, with a sizable church supporting Villar (who, besides, also used to head the NPC House bloc, some going for Joseph Estrada and others for Senator Aquino. A divided party will weaken the chances of NPC's only national candidate, Loren Legarda, who's running for vice president.

* * *

Last week, it was interesting to watch former Speaker Jose de Venecia, chair with a lot of enthusiasm, in Parliament Hotel the meeting committee of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) that he founded in 2000 and the enormous impact he commanded among the delegates from various countries, as they sought

seats in Kongreso the ruling parliamentary coalition in Brgy. 200 is really the "Global Filipino" and the new administration should make use of his invaluable worldwide connection. It was nice hearing to see the shadow boxing between this Speaker and the Senate, given that the countries whose "ideologies" they advocated are now more democratic and still strengthening their economic destinations of their respective part of the world. It was fun to hear to a time story, for the fact is that today Russia and China belong to the "BRIC" group of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa that now leads the Group of 20.

After 20 years of left Nepal, my husband, our son Conrad and I visited a city longer to visit two of the seven Unesco World Cultural Heritage Sites in the Kathmandu Valley, all within a radius of 20 km. One is Pashupatinath, the Hindu temple complex that is referred to as "Lattizar" or "city of luxury," which has a long Buddhist history and is an architectural feast boasting of a the greater concentration of temples and the second half of the 15th century, famous for its rich culture, temples and wood, metal and stone art. While staying was on the rooftop of a restaurant at the setting sun took the gorgeous temples peeked pagoda glow, one can make out from the distance one could never ever tired to. That begins up to the Himalayas. In my small view, I would imagine doing that... often. I was 20 years younger! I will write about those two lovely Nepalese cities in my diary though, see Christine's glossy Travelah magazine soon.

* * *

I attended the MMDC President's Night last week featuring Gilbo Teodoro. Speaking extemporaneously for nearly three hours, his impressed many in the audience with his deep familiarity with various issues, showing a long preoccupation with studying them and not just the result of a think tank's churning a sheaf of papers under his name. In his 40-minute opening speech, Gilbo said he won't bore his audience with his stand on issues; instead he spoke about the need for our country to form a large pool of thinkers who will pull it up and lead it to the twenty-first century. He also reiterated his "personal commitment" to "involve myself with our country in whatever capacity I will find myself in," and I read that to mean that he will be around in baby sense at least. This NPC-affiliated Batas Legaco is opine that Gilbo is "the first candidate in a long time to appeal to the mind, and not just to the heart or even before."

What the Gilbo Teodoro applause was Teodoro's pledge to coast to the first weeks of his presidency "visible acts of reconciliation" that will unite the country, for as he put it, only by uniting the country can we move it forward. This is reminiscent of Cory Aquino's "magnanimity" policy that called on his defeated opponents, such as Ramon Mitra, Eduardo Cojuangco and Imelda Marcos. I think that given his positive campaign and cool temperament Teodoro can be a healing president.

* * *

Last week I wrote that Gretchen Cojuangco's brother Jose Cojuangco donated free use of the property in Baler for the film reformers' center. That was a mistake. Cojuangco donated only a lot in Bataan where, as Lani Cordova, chair of the Negrito Cultural Foundation and of the Mamo for Gibo in Negrito, pointed out to this columnist. Quinto pays for the light and water bills too. In fact, Toby and wife Cecile Guingona have contributed from their own savings, properties and buildings in Negros accommodate Gilbo's campaign materials too. To set the record straight, the donor of the space for the Baler Aberrationary was Lani Cordova, not Jose Cojuangco. Sorry, Lani, for getting it wrong. Lani Cojuangco-Romualdez was among the hostess that organized the fundraising for Gilbo, making the "semisecret" of her parents on this issue. My apologies for the error.

Women's time

At Large

Rina Jimenez-David

"THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO SET BACK AND RELAX," reminded lawyer Corazon Juliano Soliman in her speech as a member of the Philippine delegation to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit in Singapore last November. "This is the time to step on the gas and move forward."

Soliman, together with Heidi Barrigazzi of the Inspirasan Investments Bank and I were panelists yesterday at the annual International Women's Day breakfast of the Asian Development Bank. This year's celebration of the event has observed the occasion.

Underlining the importance the bank gives to the "promotion of women's empowerment" was the presence of ADB president Haruhiko Kuroda, who opened the event. In his office's determined, Kuroda said, is "also awareness of the importance of gender in the workplace," as well as to address the issues of women's empowerment and gender equality in technology and knowledge.

Inside the ADB, Kuroda said, great steps have been made to increase the number of women not just among the staff but also among the senior management and decision-making ranks. He expressed satisfaction that, as of the end of 2009, the ratio of women in professional and managerial positions was 1:3, while as of mid-February this year, 17 percent of senior staff were women, while 28 percent, very near the 30% recommendation of 30 percent, of project officers were women.

But as pointed out by Barrigazzi, who as president of the Asian Committee on Legal Opportunities directly responsible for promoting gender equality within the ING, gender awareness in the workplace does not simply mean "adding" women to the workforce, but also "equal to actively seek out qualified women or provide training for them to ordinarily qualified for those responsibility," she said.

DEBATE. Juliet pointed out that while an impressive number of gender-equality legislation had been passed in the Asia-Pacific region in the last 15 years, the time has come to go beyond equality. In the law, most people are aware of their rights, but in concrete terms that will make a real difference in the lives of women, especially poor women.

I pointed out mainly the same thing when we were asked what positive developments we had seen in the past decade and a half since the Beijing International Conference on Women. In the Philippines, we have had several laws passed addressing women's concerns, culminating in the passage of the Magna Carta of Women. But a serious concern is how these laws have been or are being implemented, and whether enough resources have been allocated to fulfill the goals outlined in the laws.

Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, ADB vice president for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, is disheartened at the pitiful slow pace in which a very modest goal in 1995, that the ADB would lend to the creation of the Office of the Ombudsperson-General for Gender Issues. The new office, she said, assists the various agencies under the UN that aim to promote women's rights and opportunities, and is an expression of the importance the UN has given to the pursuit of gender equality within the body and in member states.

* * *

FILIPINOS have a chance to participate in the work of promoting gender equality in governance with this year's elections. Quite a number of women are running for the Senate, as in the Visayas-wide race and those in the Lakas-Kampi ticket. And, of course, Sen. Loren Legarda who is running for vice president, and Sen. Jamby Madrigal, a feisty and outspoken presidential candidate.

In addition, there are a great number of women running for representative, governor, vice governor, city and local government positions.

However, it would be irresponsible for voters to choose candidates in terms of gender alone. The 14th Congress, if you will recall, had a record number of women (and first lesbian) in its ranks. And yet the performances of our legislators (also in comparison to previous Congresses, in terms of number of laws passed, and to the ample test of attendance at sessions and committee hearings, some of them should clearly get to enough work to justify their salaries, allowances and other perks.

More important, in terms of independent study and expression analysis of data, of conducting oversight investigations of agencies of the executive branch, up to the abuses of the executive, our legislators would clearly earn a failing grade. And we all know what sort of grade our congressmen have given to our woman President, who in addition to her many failings has failed to consistently respect women's rights and protecting the country's women ("Hindi" being only one egregious example).

* * *

BUHI (losing remarks). ADB vice president for Finance and Administration Bindu Lohani urged everyone to get behind the gender framework being pushed within the bank and elsewhere. "We have set the pointers, now is the time to implement," she said, describing the commitment behind the framework.

Much the same thing can be said of women's status in this country. For the most part, women have achieved equality in many of the areas listed in the goal of the day is to implement these laws, inform the public about them, ensure that agencies as well as the courts and judges know and understand not just the letter of these laws but their purpose, and see to it that budgets are allocated to bring these laws to life.

"I think every women had more money," quipped Juliet when asked what our dreams for women were. I also wish all women could have equal opportunity, especially in terms of budgets that fulfill our government's declarations of concern for women.

* * *

227 High School Batch '61 will be celebrating its Golden Jubilee next year. They'll be holding a meeting to plan this great event, and members of the class are asked to contact Ms. Regina Ilarmeza at 0918.6870972 and 8702488 or Sally Santonan at 0915.9967264 and 927.5954 for details.

Promodiser

WHAT DOES A O'SHEA JOB MEAN?

I have not studied economics in depth nor have I read the Labor Code. I do not know how they classify jobs, but I think I know what a stable job looks like.

That very long ago, my friend, Mitchel, asked for my help in finding a job. Financially hard up, he had stopped schooling and started looking for jobs to finance his college education.

Although he knew it is quite unrealistic to aspire for something like it at his situation, given his limited qualifications, he always told me that his ideal job is one which would not require him to stand for long hours or scrub the floor, like he used to do in his previous job as a crew member in a famous fast-food chain.

We went to job fairs, read every job vacancy notice we could find and submitted his résumé and application letter to several companies and in a transparent spirit, he made sure no gray area was unclear. We answered a call and an offer to work as a "promodiser" in a supermarket located in one of the malls.

It was the first time I heard about such a job. I Googled it and understood that it was coined from a combination of the words "promotion" and "merchandiser." Looking at the search results, I suspected that the term probably originated in the Philippines.

Mitchel's job is to give demand-thickers, encourage them for display and talk to customers when necessary. It is a physically challenging job, but what choice does he have?

He had been working for several months, when the supermarket management resolved to compliant from customers about some poultry that turned rancid. Since the company boasts about maintaining a high standard of cleanliness especially with regard to food products, the management immediately interpreted the complaints as a sure sign that there was negligence on the part of the promodisers on duty.

Mitchel said an official memorandum was faxed for gargling in a future near his work station. He is afraid that it might happen to him, too. Losing his job is the last thing he wants to happen. Mitchel's job is one that I cannot describe as stable.

Another friend of mine, Carl, who finished a two-year course, is in a similar situation. I do not know how many times he has been hired and then terminated, jumping from one company to another and selling all sorts of products in virtually all the malls in the city.

When I was in college, I heard it said quite often that after graduation, some of the products of our school would become salesladies, cashiers, baggers, or do similar unswerving jobs in the malls. It was not that such jobs were scandalously demeaning, but the remark was meant to highlight the mismatch between the educational qualifications of the workforces and available jobs.

For some people, such jobs serve as temporary source of income while they are looking for jobs that are suitable to their professional training. Others accept such jobs to gain some work experience. But for many promodisers I know, it is their source of livelihood.

Of course, one can be happy in his job regardless of how heavy the workload or how little the pay. One can even be happily hopping from one odd job to another. But how about those who have become trapped in the system because they have no other choice?

One year I asked Carl how long he intended to work as a promodiser. He told me that he would not stay very long, but try to save enough money as he could apply for work abroad.

I told him that I had noticed that there were no middle-aged promodisers. I hypothesized that it was probably because the job didn't pay enough to sustain their families.

He told me that the job is age-specific, assuming that once a promodiser reaches a certain age, he is no longer considered qualified for the job.

I asked him then how old is the job was open only to workers 30 years old and below, and if there were a thousand 29-year-old promodisers in the malls, there would be a thousand jobless malls-rats aloft a year.

I wondered where they would all go. If they were lucky enough, they could start their own business. Others might be able to find other jobs, while some may be successful in some other endeavor. But what if they just don't have the right skills? During the time they were employed as promodisers, I doubt if the companies they worked for offered them any training to upgrade their skills or to develop professionally. So where would they go?

I do not know exactly what the government can do to workers like these. The mismatch between our human resources and the available jobs is a deeply rooted problem. I am looking for a presidential candidate who has very clear and workable plans to ensure that Filipino workers get the kind of jobs for which their education and training have prepared them and that once they find jobs, they will have security of tenure.

I have not talked to Mitchel or Carl in the last few weeks, but I would not be surprised if by this time their employment has been terminated for one reason or another and they are now looking for other jobs or maybe still working as promodisers in other supermarkets.

Ariel Lalizas, 22, is a public high school teacher in Tarragona Province.

Young Blood

Ariel Lalizas

Notice to Youngblood contributors: *Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquier.com.ph, together with your e-mail address, cellphone number and your youth's enrollment or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.*

Newsstand

John Nery

"There are at least 39 countries in the world today ... where one may not publish the results of a political survey within a certain period before an election, unless all the basic information about the survey is also published ... And the most sophisticated pollsters maintain that no pre-election (or pre-campaign) survey may be taken at face value to predict the outcome of any election. Some outstanding examples:

"1. In 1932, Literary Digest, the leading US pollster, predicted that Alf Landon would defeat President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt was running for a third term. FDR won, and the Digest folded up not long thereafter.

"2. In 1948, America's leading poll seers—George Gallup, Archibald Crossley and Elmo Roper—predicted President Harry S Truman would be overwhelmed by Thomas Dewey. For the election day headline screamed: 'Dewey defeats Truman.' But Truman won. The pollsters were devastated by the 81st Congress and the Social Science Research Council lasts.

"3. On Jan. 8, 2008, eleven pollsters predicted Barack Obama winning the Democratic primary in New Hampshire. But Hillary Clinton won.

"4. On May 11, 2004, in Malaysia, an SMS opt poll showed Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Anwar leading Barisan Nasional. But Jan 21 to 23 present. The official count, however, gave BN 36.07 percent of the votes to AMO's 35.46, in principle no exit poll will be held in such a close race. SMS was never investigated by any council or Congress. line has ever publicly apologized or explained why it erred. Abortion came as a relative a public memory or short that SMS should once again be polling voter preferences for any election, or though its credibility had never been tarnished?"

My reply. I have space only for four rebuttals. Here facted, one practical.

It is simply not true that SMS never apologized for or explained its 2004 exit poll. On that it was never investigated. The former senator was read the results of the independent investigation, which were disclosed in an October 2004 news conference, on the SMS website (check under "Archives"). The report, by Atty. Antonio Bautista, was the substantial number of "no answers," caused most likely by the hours rains between 3 and 6 p.m. on election day.

It is not true that the exact famous Chicago Tribune headline, "Dewey defeats Truman," hardly polling, indeed, Roper had stopped polling altogether because he thought Dewey was the runaway winner. The reason the Tribune got it wrong was because a newspaper strike had limited the paper to go to press with only the first edition. Second, and because its Washington, DC correspondent, staunchly Republican, called the election wrong. He published his report in the morning of that headline.

It is also not true that the Literary Digest was the "leading" pollster in 1936. It was only a popular magazine that polled its own readers on their presidential preferences. In 1936 (and 1932), it predicted FDR would lose his bid for a second (and third) term, based on what its readers said. Its poll was not scientific, and in the depth of the Great Depression, preferred. It was a non-scientific survey (and did away with later because it was wrong).

In his book (subtitle: 2010 Midterm Elections explained), why have we been mistaken for newspaper in the Philippine setting. (It's a no-brainer, really.) My question for Mr. Tatad: If SMS and Pulse Asia misrepresentative samples," how is it possible that the results of the presidential and all presidential and vice presidential runners have been tracked confirm their findings?

* * *

Next week: How we can win with honor.

They Said

Conscience vote

On the vote band: "The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines] has said it was according to your conscience. Do the other. It says it's not moral in vote for people who support the reproductive health bill. There it is double standard here.

—Gilbert Teodoro, Makabe Rally

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Pinoys lack common sense

FILIPINOS TEND TO OVER-ANALYZE SIMPLE, common sense issues. They romanticize problems that result in complacency and fear, if not stupidity. They are sensitive when their limited and uneducated views are pointed out by a foreigner, but when such fellow Filipinos insult from their country's treasury, they become numb and lose their common sense.

Lack of common sense. This is the problem in the Philippines, not the imperfect history of our country that mostly rely on an unfair overview sense of the same of our nation (which, by itself, validates the observation about a "government not like hell in Filipinos").

But government is not like hell because we allow the devils among us to commit it. If we're supporting the devils to impose things in our society, then we might as well expect hell to freeze. The devils avail our country's wills and honey and their solution to the ever-worsening poverty is for everyone else to "be a hero and work abroad so that you can keep our selfish government afloat."

No doubt, the Philippine is being run like hell by its own people. But do not blame only our citizens in government. We should blame ourselves, too, for allowing the devils to steal.

There is no end to the list of common sense. Our informal governments cannot possibly improve anything if we, the people, refuse to see our own faults and weaknesses, one of which is our failure to punish stealing. Until we find the courage to tap into our common sense, our country will not only end up like hell, it will become hell itself.

Think of the Philippines as your own house which you rent in May 2010. If you were to catch a thief inside your house, what would you do? Should you kick him out immediately? Would you let him, back in, again? Would you purchase him a house? Would you even ask him to be the caretaker or supervisor of your house?

What does common sense dictate to protect your house against thieves? If it protects our houses, then why don't we Filipinos do it? Is it because we lack the common sense to appreciate the fact that these thieves have entered in our house and the interior of the house they have screwed, beat up, hit have become hostages in our own house. Only common sense will give us the courage to reclaim our house from these thieves. Every courage we can gain provided it is very away from what has stained this former commonwealth—a government run like heroes by Filipinos.

—KEAS BIDCO, eye_house@yahoo.com

LETTERS

A sinister possibility

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO SAID SHE is prepared to sit most to court should she make the controversial appointment of a chief justice in waiting before the end of the term of Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynato Puno come May 17, thus amplifying the will go ahead with it.

The appointments looks like a mistake more than anything when the terms of the president, vice president, former president and speaker of the House of Representatives expires on June 30, 2010, a chief appointed chief justice becomes the acting president until after new elections are held.

Assuming that GMA is capable of the worst betrayal of public trust so far in suspected of doing in the "Hello" scandal of the 2004 elections, it is conceivable that should an Aquino victory appear most likely as election day approaches, she would engineer the sending of the May 10 elections to pave the way for "her" chief to occupy the presidency.

—L. ENRIQUEZ JR., emdelaenz@yahoo.com

Sick pensioner requires GSIS action

AFTER READING GUDOFFEDO Pimentel letter called "Forbidden pensioner needs quick GSIS action" (Inquirer, 2/28/10), I was reminded of the survivor pension claims of my lumpsuker Reynaldo Balbidon, who was supposed to receive them from the Government Service Insurance System starting July 2009.

Despite frequent personal follow-ups by his aide Jaquie with the GSIS main office, my lumpsuker, who is elderly and aging, has not received the benefits that him until now.

It behooves the GSIS authorities to expedite the release of the survival pension of Balbidon before it is too late.

—CLEOTILDE S. TILAR, vice mayor, Municipality of Pagsanjan, Province of Laguna

De Quiros' strange turnaround

IF IS APPARENT PART CONSERVE de Quiros is evidently pushing for the presidential candidacy of Sen. Noynoy Aquino. What could have changed the direction of the wind for De Quiros? Some other the Honorable Lucas Jaramillo, he never is nothing underwrote not only of human Presidente Gary Aquino and then Rep. Noynoy Aquino, but as of the late Ninoy Aquino himself!

Where are to rethink the tendency of Inquirer readers on subject De Quiros' stories on Nov. 22, 2009, portions of which I quote below:

"Noynoy Aquino says labor-baited the workers in Hacienda Luisita, who have been complaining about their lot, to strike. Well, so what? ...

"In the very least, workers have the right to strike. One would imagine congressmen would know that. If strike is neither illegal nor banned, it is convenient by the Constitution and underlined by the doctrines of the workers' movements. Only Lucio Tan and now Mercy's namesake (Senator) think it is not.

"Very curious understand why the workers refuse to accept his offer of sympathy and prayers for the dead. Well, if I recall right, it is not Virata had no money money from his, Domingo Cruich after conveying as too the sympathy and prayers of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos for the death of her husband.

"But the 11 corpses lying on the ground point to something broke dam's even bigger than that Hacienda Luisita hasn't been land-reformed ... Ninoy Aquino might have been talking of today when he said, 'How is a land contentious oil to democracy but not by assassination?' Democracy. There is a reason why Cory Aquino is the public dedicated to equality but refused to an archaic system of cause."

What may rose in 2004 remains true to this day. The installation of Noynoy Aquino as president of Cory Aquino's Wrath and Newness will prevail today at Luisita, where the business rise a hand-to-mouth sequence while Noynoy's family gets his cut the blood, sweat and tears of the poor.

That we can Noynoy now offer himself as president when he carries the anything like the poor of Luisita and while, in fact, he is notwithstanding to the sufferings and injustice that are found on them?

That we can Noynoy assisted in 2004, it was as if the martyrs of Luisita deserved to be shot just for asking the Cojuangcos and the Aquinos to finally give them the land which, in the first place, belongs to them.

—REED MADDOX-LARC, rico.magbiro@gmail.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of issues and subjects by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Sipse and Maguindanao Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to 896-6160, 897-4766, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

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Maynilad

Please keep it up, Ceres

THIS IS FOR CERES SONG I HEG HIS BOSS, genius, I couldn't help but pitch in my vacation to clear "Mabuhay" as "Mabuhay ka, o Ingat, warriors"). I was enraged and was about to read after reading it. Could the phrase the deepen be more?

I have learnt from some acquaintances that indeed, Ceres is the genius in the Department of Public Works and Highways. Ceres, keep up the good work.

The column reminds me of another request she wrote about a big farm land leased by the Roxas government. The land supposedly belongs to the Aetas. If I remember right, I will pay for her and her family—president—to keep her from harm and that she may have the guts to resist temptation (like bribe, an occupational hazard). Again, thank you, Ceres.

—ALLEN C. PEDIA, aepedia@canadavilge.edu.ph

Greed motivates Reds

WHAT MAKES THE MAOISTS/RADICAL Maoist creeds still significant to the leaders of the Communist Party New People's Army National Democratic Front? Is it really ideology? Or is there legitimate value of subsistence farmers or are they just using communist theories (which has long been abandoned and unsupported as the harmful of history) to clearly their personal agendas. Like maximize strength in "revolutionary tax," "permit to campaign" (PTC) and "permit to mine" (PTM)?

Ironically, hard-line members of the local communist insurgency do not even admit that. They are communists. No, they continue to use the communist credo to accuse, separate and disabuse would be members. Then, they do through down. They assault the local mining people themselves propagate the mining credo of injustice, poverty and corruption by unfriendly imposing unlawful schemes like their PTCs and PTMs. And the they do with impunity, coercion and violence. Greed for money and power is what motivates the leaders of the communist insurgency. This is what makes the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist creeds still significant to their leaders. And this is what members and supporters of the CPP/NPA/NDF are compelled not to believe.

The CPP/NPA/NDF are masters in the game of mass propaganda, facts and actual events, however, don't lie. A former political instructor who used to operate in Central Luzon declared that "both against the communist insurgents at one discussing that last supervisor never just using the organization's money (apparently acquired from hapless owners of local businesses) for their personal expenses. (comrade Pete Galas Perlas), a commander leader in Compostela Valley, became notorious for snatching himself through unlawful scheme. Known to Bicolanos as Oscar, a CPP/NPA/NDF finance officer in Bicol region, was caught red-fighting in Bulacan over several P4 million (apparently received from community supporters and farmers' organizations). In his possession. Gregorio Rosal (alias Ka Roger) was able to avoid his dismissal as executive school in Angeles, using influence and connections. Commander Ka Parago (second through executive activities in Quezon province, Jose Maria Sison (alias Joma), the founding chair of the CPP/NPA/NDF, continues to live in luxury while in exile.

The CPP/NPA/NDF maintain its perpetuate for good for money and power and to realize its quest to replace our democratic way of life, its leaders' unlimited refusal to renounce decent, consistent and valuable means to their vile objectives. This is the dark reality about the CPP/NPA/NDF which should not only be made us aware for itself. Let it serve as a wake up call to all Filipinos to be vigilant and to support all endeavors to destroy that wanton cancer that the Armed Forces of the Philippines is now with the Filipino people's exploitation for a just and peaceful society. Let us all be mindful that the end of keeping the flame of democracy burning is a shared responsibility.

—COL. DANIEL A. LUZERO, assistant chief of staff for civil-military operations, Philippine Army

Across the NATION

Mendoza goes to SC to fight eviction

By Dona Z. Pazolanges and Leila Salaverria
In Manila
and Carmela Reyes
Inquirer Central Luzon

EMBATTLED BULACAN GOV. JOSELITO MENDOZA YESTERDAY turned to the Supreme Court for reprieve from efforts to unseat him as his supporters and those of his rival, Roberto Pagdanganan, set up camp in the provincial capitol.

Mendoza asked the High Court to issue a temporary restraining order (TRO) to stop the Commission on Elections (Comelec) from enforcing a decision to unseat and replace him with Pagdanganan.

The Comelec Second Division, in a ruling adopted by the commission en banc, ousted Pagdanganan, winner of the 2007 elections over Mendoza.

'Queso' order

Mendoza, through lawyers Sixto Brillantes and Roger Bello, said the Comelec en banc's "queso" March 3 order installing Pagdanganan remained "grave error" and was not caused by majority of the seven members poll body.

Comelec Commissioners Nicolasito Perez, Lucenito Tagle and Elias Yusoph, who are members of the Comelec Second Division which originally voted in favor of Pagdanganan's election protest, affirmed their decision.

Three Comelec members, however, took no part in the en banc ruling—Chair Jose Melo and Commissioners Gregorio Lantajo and Armando Velasco. Commissioner Rene Sarmiento—Dissented.

Mendoza said Pagdanganan did not get a majority vote after the recounting of the votes.

Pattern

He also said there was a "most ominous pattern" in the decisions of the Comelec Second Division to uphold the electoral protests against Imus and Bulacan Liberal Party re-election aspirants Grace Padaca of Isabela and Eddie Pacalso of Pampanga.

Padaca and Mendoza's appeals are still pending in the Comelec en banc.

"Surely in due time, Gov. Grace Padaca shall also be unseated in like manner and the lookout is the field of Gov. Antonio Diokno of Pampanga reportedly in a similar fashion," he said.

"All the three protestees are in exactly the same situation," said Mendoza's petition.

Mendoza said most of the Comelec commissioners have reversed the original unofficial ballot to see if those votes all credited by the same person. He said the ballots are still in the custody of the Bulacan Electoral Tribunal.

Digging in

The Comelec served the writ of execution, or the ruling granting, last Monday day in, refusing to leave the governor's office. Pagdanganan, wanting to oversee as governor during the May 10 elections, has already taken up left in Mendoza's room, set up his own office over Mendoza's.

Melo said Mendoza's refusal to heed the Comelec ruling was punishable, but that it was up to the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to enforce penalties.

"We're not the one who enforces that," said Melo. Comelec officials in Bulacan served the writ of execution yesterday with DILG officials.

At least 3,000 supporters of Mendoza camped out at the provincial capitol to prevent Mendoza from being evicted from the governor's office.

Mendoza, who addressed his supporters after Mass on Monday, said Pagdanganan should wait for the Supreme Court action on his petition for a TRO.

SUPPORTERS of unseated Bulacan Gov. Joselito Mendoza erect a barricade as they guard the governor's office in the province. Mendoza has petitioned the Supreme Court for a temporary restraining order. His rival, Roberto Pagdanganan, has set up his own office near Mendoza's. ALAN LIM

Rabies awareness: Fighting the ultimate killer bite

RABIES IS AN ABSOLUTE KILLER—100 PERCENT of infected victims, once symptoms appear, die of a slow and painful death. However, rabies is 100 percent preventable. This March, the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Animal Industry, in partnership with local government units (LGUs), will have a month-long series of activities to promote awareness on rabies prevention.

This year's rabies awareness month aims to encourage Filipinos to register and vaccinate their pet dogs and to educate the public on the importance of human pre-exposure vaccination, pet immunization, responsible pet ownership, and animal bite control. Communication to the fulfillment of a rabies-free Philippines by year 2020.

The celebrations kicked off last March 6, 2010 with a pet parade and motorcade at the University of Makati in West Rembo, Makati City. Activities for the day included free rabies immunizations, seminars, pet shows, video presentations, and exhibits. A forum on rabies awareness and prevention was conducted, with pet owners and members of the media learning the facts and myths regarding rabies and its prevention.

More often, rabies-related deaths are due to ignorance and poverty. There are still animal bite victims who do not receive the appropriate post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for various reasons such as belief in myths and traditional healers. To improve access and decrease cost of PEP, the DOH has established at least 311 animal bite treatment centers (ABTCs) geographically distributed all over the country. In the National Capital Region alone, there are almost 11 ABTCs, with each city having at least one treatment/ bite treatment center. These ABTCs are managed by LGUs and some by the DOH. The health department gives free anti-rabies vaccine and immune globulin augmentation to these ABTCs in order for them to provide the immediate and appropriate treatment of animal bites. These ABTCs are managed by trained medical professionals and with adequate anti-rabies vaccines available for the PEP of bite victims.

With total rabies reduction still evident in communities, it becomes more critical for dog owners to maintain zealous rabies dealing with their pets. Owners should take the initiative to register their pets and have them vaccinated against rabies. Visit your veterinarian or the nearest animal bite treatment center now to know more about rabies prevention.

THE UNFINISHED portion of the P1.2-billion Quezon Interchange Road Project. LAUREN VILLANUEVA/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

Quarrying suspension blamed for road delay

LUCENA CITY—THE DEPARTMENT of Public Works and Highways said the temporary suspension of quarrying in Batangas town for the past three months has been delaying the completion of two other road projects in Quezon province.

Colonel Flaviano DPWH district engineer, said two main projects are delayed because of lack of aggregates—the P1.3-billion Quezon Interchange Road Project and the P422-million Candelaria to Bypass Road Project.

"If the situation will continues, we're afraid that it might cause serious problems," she said.

Both projects were initiated by Rep. Proceso Alcala of Quezon's second district.

Jovencio Lirio, DPWH project engineer, said contractors were forced to get materials from more distant and delays because it took longer and more money to get the materials from the town.

The 20.7-kilometer Quezon Interchange Road Project, started in 2008 and stretching from Lucena City to Tayabas, has five concrete bridges and will serve as an alternate route to the Maharlika Highway.

The new highway will also serve as a direct link to the Quezon Industrial zone in Barangay City.

The Candelaria project was expected to ease traffic on Maharlika Highway and was supposed to provide a faster, safer and shorter travel route between Manila and Bicol.

Then Environment Secretary Jondex Atienza stopped quarrying in Batangas on May 15, heeding complaints from residents and Church leaders. —Delfin T. Mallari Jr. Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

GMA hacks more coal plants in Visayas

By Irene R. Sun Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

TOLEDO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo made a strong push for two coal-fueled power plants, which are partly owned by a businessman perceived to be close to her administration, to meet electricity demands in the Visayas.

Mrs. Arroyo said that one new coal power plant—one in Cebu and the other in Iloilo—operates, the Mindoro demand for power [illegible].

The Cebu Energy Development Corp. (CEDC) started the construction of its 246-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Toledo City, southwest of Cebu City, in 2008.

The CEDC is a consortium of Global Business Power Corp., the power arm of the Metrobank Group; Pacific Partners Power; Inc. and Mitsubishi Corporation. Also in Power Corp. and the Visayas Power Corp.

The Panay Energy Development Corp., another affiliate of Global Business Power is also building a 164-MW coal-fired power plant in La Paz, Iloilo City.

"The whole of the Visayas cannot survive in power needs," Mrs. Arroyo said at the ceremony. "Without [the] 82 billion [pesos] P3 billion] CEDC coal-fired power plant in Toledo City

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Paid for by PDP LABAN, 731 J.P. Rizal Street, Barangay Valenzuela, Makati City

PDEA: Drug gangs now want protectors elected

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Elmar O. Arigo
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—DRUG SYNDICATES have gone a step further in their bid for political protection by helping officials—now getting their "assist" by protection money—win public office, top antinarcotics officials in the Visayas said.

Rod Ledesma, Western Visayas regional director of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, said the PDEA detected the new strategy as it monitors several candidates in the Visayas region with known drug links.

Eight candidates for councilors and reappointed in the Visayas are being watched closely by the PDEA for their links with known drug syndicates, said Ledesma.

He said four of the candidates are in Western Visayas and two are in Central Visayas. PDEA, he said, has been monitoring the candidates since last year.

"We have established their links with known personalities and groups involved in the drug trade," Ledesma said.

Randy Peñaflor, PDEA Central Visayas regional director, said two candidates in the region are being investigated for their links with drug dealers.

Peñaflor said a candidate for councilor in Cebu City and a candidate for board member in Bohol have financiers of drug enterprises.

Ledesma said visible some of the six candidates in Panay are "known but dormant in the drug trade, they have close relationships with known drug dealers.

Some of the candidates, he said, are being monitored to have been meeting regularly with drug syndicates.

'Any support would understandably be clandestine and it could be in the form of influence or the promise of votes'

He declined to identify them, however, but said the candidates are running for councilor and congressman in the provinces of Iloilo, Negros Occidental, Antique and Capiz.

Drug syndicates, according to Ledesma, have expanded their operations from simply bribing law enforcers, members of the judiciary and prosecutors to getting their men elected in legislative and policy-making bodies, like local councils and Congress.

"Any support would understandably be clandestine and it could be in the form of influence or the promise of votes from those involved in the drug trade," he said.

"It is common knowledge when these candidates are," said Ledesma.

SUSPECTED drug peddlers are held at the Cebu City police office after their arrests. These drug suspects were linked to politicians.

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₱1,088	Manila to Bacolod, Cebu, Iloilo or Kalibo; Cebu to Siargao or Pagadian (NEW!
₱1,188	Manila to Boracay (Caticlan), Catbalogan, Calbayog, Dumaguete, Roxas, Tacloban or Tuguegarao; Cebu to Boracay (Caticlan), Bohol, Puerto Princesa or Zamboanga;
₱1,288	Manila to Puerto Princesa; Cebu to Clark, Dipolog, General Santos, Legazpi or Ozamiz; Davao to Iloilo or Zamboanga
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NEWSBRIEFS

■ NEGROS ORIENTAL

Cops reinforce Army

1,000 police platoons from Cebu, which is tasked here to shadow Comelec on May 10, will help the military in its counterinsurgency campaign and closely monitor the activities of three private armies.

Senior Supt. Augusto Marquez Jr., Negros Oriental police chief, said the police will be belonged to the Regional Public Safety Battalion (RPSB).

Marquez said two of the three private armed groups being watched in the province were the Guardians Brotherhood Inc., with 33 members, and the Wescott Group, composed of former rebels.

Florencio Bacolod, Inquirer Visayas

■ NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

Largest poultry producer

RB BIRD Occidental surpassed Bais as the largest producer of poultry in Western Visayas, according to Larry Montevirgen, agriculture regional director. Montevirgen said Negros Occidental produced 8.6 million chickens in 2009.

Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

■ ILOILO

Small vessels may sail

NEW GUIDELINES allowing small vessels to ply the Boracay-Caticlan Island route during Typhoon Signal No. 1 has taken effect on March 6, according to the Philippine Coast Guard.

The rules allow the commercial travel of any vessels weighing 1,000 gross tons and below between Iloilo and Guimaras and between Caticlan and Boracay Island when sea conditions are normal even if there areas are under Storm Signal No. 1, said Commander William Mikel, Coast Guard commander in Western Visayas.

Nestor P. Burgos Jr., Inquirer Visayas

■ CAPIZ

Neither Binay nor Lorca

AT LEAST three Liberal Party (LP) members allied with former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joyce" Bautista Lipana-Villa (Capiz LP) political party vehemently denied supporting the vice presidential bids of former Sen. Loren Legarda or Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay.

LIPANA-VILLA

LEGARDA

The LKC officials said party members believed that the incumbent's time would be Legarda. But members Party in the announcement would be her support for the candidacy of former MC-affiliated mayors running for reelection, including Roxas City Mayor Vicente Bermejo.

Legarda later clarified she was not considering LKC in declaring support for Benigno Aquino III's presidential candidacy.

Binay was accused of murder involving seven men P2.9 million of agriculture funds for the Liberal Party support for Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's bid for a regular term in 2004.

Bayan Muna Reps. of Cuadro said SRC has also dealt with different national parties and he and fellow Lakas-Kampi members under LKC are supporting the vice presidential bid of Edu Manzano. He running mate of Lakas-Kampi nominee Senator Gilbert Teodoro.

Felipe G. Debio, Inquirer Visayas

■ EVENTS

Z. Martinez; 63

ZELDA L. Benitez-Martinez of Pagsanjan, Laguna, died March 5. She was 63.

Her body lies at La Funeraria Paz Sucaldito Classics, Alunan Avenue corner Rizal Park Street, Santos City.

She was survived by husband Norberto L. Martinez; children and grandchildren.

Funeral is scheduled today at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City, after a 1:30 p.m. Mass.

Excelroof, Cobra fives seek share of leadership

By Jasmine W. Payo

EXCELROOF AND COBRA ENERGY DRINK try to ignite a piece of the lead when they tackle separate rivals in the PBL PG Flex-Foam Pluserve Cup today at the FEGG Flying V Arena in San Juan.

The Excelroof 25ers go up against the Sky-E squad at 2 p.m. while the Cobra boomers collide with the Accel Lagundi crew at 4.

The 25ers and the boomers hope to forge a four-way logjam for the lead with idle Phoenix Competers and Graneck Blue at 9-1.

The top four squads at the end of the single-round elimination will advance to the semifinals, with the No. 1 and No. 2 teams entering the twice-to-beat incentive.

It will be a showdown between two stanky ABB-ers in the first game with Besles Aquino, the Hyatt MVP of NCAA champ San Sebastian, leading Excelroof and John Wilson, the regular season MVP from Jose Rizal, leading Brew C.

Excelroof coach Art Aguirre said holding down Wilson, who averages a tournament-best 20.2 points, will be among the tough tasks for his 25ers.

"The key to winning a playing good defense," said Aguirre. "As long as we play defense well, I see no reason why we can't enter the Final Four."

Meanwhile, Cobra coach Lawrence Chongson said his team needs to work on consistency for days after his boomers scraped past the 22ers in a 66-64 thriller.

But the boomers remain favored over the Cough Busters, the pre-season pick who, at 1-2, are still struggling to find their form with Edwin Asoro, Ren Ren Gamalinda and Sean Ge.

The Revolutionists hope to build on their breakthrough 81-79 win over Agelessness last week.

Trinidad gives up key PBL post

TRINIDAD

By Jane Nicanor

THE PHILIPPINE BASketball League will have a new commissioner in the next conference.

League commissioner Chino Trinidad confirmed yesterday that he is giving up the position at the end of the ongoing 2010 PBL PG Flex-Foam Pluserve Cup.

"To be quite honest about it, I feel my passion for the game and you can quote me on that," Trinidad said in a Facebook message he posted for a reporter. "Basketball is in bad shape.

"It's been 18 years and I feel I have given myself to the PBL enough. I will miss the PBL but our limits have to meet sooner."

Trinidad, who is in Los Angeles for UMA TV coverage of Manny Pacquiao's bashing for his WBO welterweight title defense against Ghanaian Joshua Clottey, said he will focus on broadcasting and help promote professional Filipino boxers.

"When I come here (Los Angeles), it's a sign that my days in PBL commissioner has finally come to a close," said Trinidad.

He added that the PBL board already had an inkling that he would step down.

"I would like to bring my passion and energy to a sport that makes us all proud to be Pinoys—boxing," Trinidad said. "I would love to participate in making sure our tradition of winning continues doesn't end upon Pacquiao's retirement.

"I will remain a position as a rule for myself, but I will participate actively in our probosers' discovery and training here in the US."

Trinidad said he had asked the board to keep Butch Montoya—one his deputy has a lot of valuable inputs to improve the league.

Cortez, Alvarez, Kramer reinforce Express

MIKE Cortez (right) set to play for his third team.

By Manny R. Castillo

ADRIEL (FORMERLY BURGER KING) HUNTERday (sort, two big men for the price of one and was set to obtain prized guard Mike Cortez from San Miguel to boost its ranking PBA Fiesta Cup campaign.

The Express, less than two weeks after acquiring Dacey De Ocampo from Talk 'N'Text, opted to skip the 6-foot-9 center to Barangay Ginebra for former Rookie of the Year Rich Alvarez and Greg Kramer in a move that added more ceiling to the frontline reserves of Ying Gotan.

After the deal was approved by both squads, the Express prepared to give up Alex Cabagnot in exchange for former cop rookie Cortez in a swap expected to be finalized today.

Cortez and Cabagnot will be playing for their third and fourth squads, respectively, since the Import-laced twist spun in the Fiesta Conference with a double header on March 23.

Cortez won the rookie trophy while playing for Shake, which later dealt him to the Bolts for GA Tolentino. Cabagnot started his career with the Gerlin, was later traded to Coca-Cola, and found his way to Burger King.

Late last two weeks ago, the Express also acquired the unsub-shooting Ilaw Bus Rivada as part of the De Ocampo deal while giving up JR Quiahoy.

ALVAREZ

KRAMER

Ivan, Mike Wu and Aaron Aban.

"It was complete that (Cortez deal), I think we're pretty much set for the coming tournament," Adriel manager and PBA board chair Leo Alvarez said.

Adriel, determined to be the solid and player De Ocampo is the recent EFC-PBA Philippine Cup, will be reinforced by Leroy Hitherson, a former dunk champion in the Mexican professional league.

Meanwhile, Philippine Cup runner-up Shake has tapped the services of Dionisio Siruguo, a strong, sexy 6004 D-League All-Star who played to college for St. Mary's.

Siruguo is just 22 and listed as 6-foot-7. He averages 15.3 points, 9.6 rebounds and 2.2 assists in 30 games for the Los Angeles D-Knights.

Magic top Lakers in finals rematch

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—VINCE CARTER had 25 points, and Dwight Howard finished with 15 points and 16 rebounds as the Orlando Magic beat the Lakers, 96-94, on Sunday to hand Los Angeles its first three-game losing streak of the Fun Good Kobe Bryant Era.

Carter made his first 13 free throws and kept the Magic in control, thwarting signs of why Orlando made the move for the right-

CARTER

three All-Star after losing to the Lakers in last year's finals.

Bryant had 34 points and Gasol added 20 points for the Lakers, unlking to the locker room distraught and dejected after their latest loss. And with quite a different feeling than that championship-soaked championship celebration last June.

At Boston, Ray Allen scored a game-high 25 points, including a go-ahead 3-pointer with 17.1 seconds remaining, as Boston rallied past Washington, 86-83.

Boston raided 79-66 with 6:31 remaining and responded with a 20-4 run to close out the game with eight points from Allen and six from guard Rajon Rondo. AP

Who can help Clottey repair his right punch?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

YOU SEE, there has been a non-stop flow of information stemming on the overwhelming edge Pacquiao enjoys over Clottey.

* * *

His could partly be blamed on Clottey himself, who continued to claim he did not see the need to study Pacquiao fight tapes.

Of course, Clottey had also seen Pacquiao on tape.

But whether this single observation was playing it coy or openly offering a headstrong, Manny may have to step in and give a timely advice.

Granted that Clottey indeed no longer sees the urgent necessity of dissecting Pacquiao on video. It's a sure thing he (Clottey) remains himself to this.

* * *

Manny may have to also join Clottey the challenger in this effort to re-think Clottey the fourteen fighters which also dubbed back home as the knockdowners.

But if he do it down and watch together, there's no doubt Manny, who are undefeated, learned the latest features under 68, would readily set the ground flow to Clottey's right hand punch.

This reporter had the luck of observing Clottey when Dodot Jayson explored those two features (Jhonnie Acosta at the GH in 2007.

* * *

Clottey, as confirmed by The Onin, Quezon Bounty, was that hand by unconscious decision.

* * *

Anyway, as Hennes would confirm, he also observed something strange in Clottey's right punch.

Actually, it's a (Radical dollar) from that superior's view.

Clottey has the primitive habit of launching the right blow silently from the shoulder, like a pitcher throwing a fastball.

This causes the preceding powerful shot to be punched to advantage. Clottey is being ignored with a coaching soap from the corner area.

Here's hoping Manny would be able to be armed with Clottey and his reverse rotator hand technique.

What could come out of this pre-fight conference should help greatly in stalling the Pacquiao-Clottey fight a fairly even and somewhat close.

* * *

By the Clottey camp is interested in getting pointers on her minute repairs, they could try and contact former two time world champion Juanito Espinosa throughout founder and original manager Sammy Salgado whatever go cheap advice he knows fights his successful defense of the world featherweight crown against Mauricio Cabello (Gensolos in Cantilupa on March 1996.)

Subic triathlon lures crack foreign bidders

A FORMIDABLE FOREIGN field will vie for honors in the Asian Junior and Under-23 Triathlon Championships in May in Subic Bay.

China, Japan, South Korea, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Macau, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Syria, India and Singapore are expected to field two in the two-day event, which will mark the 18th year that an International triathlon is held in Subic.

"Those three medals (of athletes) will rise from triathletes in this region," said Triathlon Association of the Philippines head Toto Carmona Jr.

Elite and Under-23 bidders will compete in the Olympic distance of 1.5 km swim, 40 km bike and 10 km run. The sprint distance—750-m swim, 20-K bike and 5-K run—will be used for the junior class.

The race, co-promoted by the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and the Philippine Sports Commission, will start at the Hanjin Shipyard and end at the Waterfront. Gold FP Papaya

Clottey holds ...

From page A-16

29 victims while losing just five for a knockout ratio of 82.35 percent, which is higher than Pacquiao's 80 percent of 69-to-86.

Pacquiao, however, has seen to dismantled his last four opponents in different weight categories—David Diaz, Oscar De La Hoya, Ricky Hatton and Miguel Cotto.

The 66-year-old Mosteza, who also served as Pacquiao's cutman for six fights from 2003-08, the last against Mosteza Rob Morales, gave Clottey a 75 percent chance to upstage the seven-time world champion in an many-dominant.

Mosteza was earlier quoted as saying that only Pacquiao could beat Pacquiao but changed tack after watching the hard-working Clottey in training.

In another surprising twist, Jones announced that Clottey would be at 220 pounds at fight night against the smaller Pacquiao, who has never gone past 140 lb.

World Cup stint for 11 Pinoy street kids

By Cedell P. Tejano

THIRD BETTERSWEET STORIES started in the shore of Mexico.

Maybe, those days are hoping for a fairytale ending in South Africa.

Dubbed by their handlers as a "miracle team," the 11 players who make up the Philippine football team in the Homeless Street Child World Cup from March 12 to 24 are relishing the experience of representing the country for the first time in the tournament.

"We know we have a responsibility to represent our country well," goalkeeper Roberto Grimes, 16, said in Filipino.

"We are looking forward to the experience," added Orlando, whose family lives in a container van in Mandaluyong area.

Two members of the squad, Raymond Flores and Mario Tiny, almost failed to secure passports.

Separated from their parents, Elmea and Tiny, who live in Tuyo on Kalentong, had to scour for relatives to help their secure necessary documents.

"This is an incredible team," said team manager Craig Bowron, who, in coordination with the Tiny's Mona Rosenheim, helped find sponsors for the team.

The team is mainly supported by Action Trust which will shoulder the up bare of the players.

THREE girls are part of the 11 team to football's Street Child World Cup.

Three girls from the Tuloy Foundation Inc. run by Jose Rosen—Zitea Mae Inocencio, Lea Arlyn Arnao and Loralyn Cabanyan—are also part of the squad.

The Filipinos have been grouped with Tanzania, Ukraine and Brazil. More than the competition, though, the players are gaining life-defining lessons.

'Heavies' clash in NCA derby today

THE COUNTRY'S FINEST COMMERCIAL COLLEGE TEAMS IN BASKETBALL of The National Cookies Alliance (NCA) derby series at The Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

Today's competition, hosted by former Floral Gov. Ito Ynares and sponsored by Tanduay Corporation, features derby top guns Bernie Pons, Emil Chua, Lito Delfino, Rhenel Nico Mayo, Hector Mercado, Kaptan Gelo, Ricky Valentin, Boy Torres, Phillip Dhonghkee and Jorge Rosario. They are all expected to extend NCA members for the championship.

Heading the members' ranks are Pinoy Alliance, Jimmy Ang, Patrick Ambrosio, Fernie Buenaventa, Dino Cantos, Eric de Guzman, Eric dela Rosa, Jan Gamboa, Mike Ison, Jun Jimenez, Rudy Jongco, Jr. Magsaysay, Nicky Magsaysay, Mario Mendoza, Jose Rapadas, Jerry Rapadas, Jerry Reyes, Jr. Sangalang, Nino Sandoval, Bernard Sandoz, Manny Santos, Ito Cotta and Batangas Group. Jun Soriano, James Uy, Mario Villarosa, Rafael Villar, the Madrigal papa brothers and Sammy Yaun.

Aaron Silva, Contributor

CONTENTMENT Manny Pacquiao can now eat what he likes. AFP/LUCAS

SPORTS
Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ortaez

Bet $800 on Pacquiao victory, win just $100

By Ray Lauren

HOLLYWOOD—IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY Filipino ring superstar Manny Pacquiao exudes confidence just six days before he tangles with Ghanaian challenger Joshua Clottey.

Unlike before, Pacquiao has been training at the Wild Card Gym here on a full stomach.

"Kain ng kain (I keep on eating), Pacquiao told Manila-based sportswriters Sunday in his suite at the gated Palazzo residences here. "Solven ashes po (And I had olive oyster)."

No wonder, skill of Penn Jillette Roach has lavished superlatives on his favorite vessel's roaming hams.

Boxing writers, observers, photographers and visitors gushed at the way Pacquiao has toyed with experienced sparmates and eventual it was five since two hours each day.

And betting odds only underscore Pacquiao's seeming irrefutability going into the World Boxing Organization welterweight title fight on Saturday (Sunday morning in Manila) at the Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas.

According to bookmakers, Pacquiao is now at minus-800 and Clottey at plus-550.

It means that an $800 bet on a Pacquiao victory will earn just $100 while a $100 bet on a Clottey win will yield $550.

An attractive proposition is to bet "will go" the distance (minus-190) and "won't go" the distance (plus-140) betting.

If the bout lasts less than 9½ rounds, a $100 "won't go" bet will earn $140. A "will go" bet of $140 will earn just $100.

Pacquiao's speed, power and strategy have so impressed Roach that the trainer said he expects the Filipino superstar to inflict Clottey's first knockout defeat.

Because it was Sunday here, Pacquiao took a break and attended to his spiritual obligations. He heard Mass and skipped road work.

"Okay na, ready na," said Pacquiao, who continues to evade questions regarding the outcome of the pay-per-view inside. "Good luck to both of us."

The seven-division world champion closes training camp Monday morning with four rounds of sparring against Raymundo Beltran at Wild Card.

Years Pacquiao will take the three-hour flight to Dallas-area chartered plane along with an entourage of some 100 people.

Clottey's team flew to Dallas on a commercial flight Sunday.

Pacman webmaster tops weight challenge

By Ray Lauren

SLADECK: #9 to

HOLLYWOOD—The biggest loser was the biggest winner in Manny Pacquiao's weight challenge that ended here Sunday.

American Tim Sladeck, a two-time Manila visitor, tipped 88 silos (+ rolls) by shedding off 45 pounds, shrinking from a heavyweight (224) to super-middleweight (147), or an equivalent of 22.9 percent, in just 28 days to pocket the $20,000 (about P920,000) top prize.

Thirty-seven others, including coach-cum-sparring partner Ellen Dolan and Pacquiao adviser Michael Koncz, also battled Pacquiao's diner. Lose at least 15 percent of your body weight and win $5,000.

Pacquiao paid out a total of $134,000 in rewards.

Sladeck, who operates the MPhysiques.com, went on a diet and trained for four hours each day to match Arthur's feat in 2008 and that of Kenny last year.

Dr. Allan Flores, a sing physician, conducted random drug testing for participants, including former boxers Elorcadio Ocaña and Jerry Elating.

Clottey holds his ground vs KO artist

By Ray Lauren

HOLLYWOOD—GHANAIAN JOSHUA CLOTTEY is reputed to be so tough he can take the punches of Colombian light heavyweight knockout artist Alejandro Berrio.

But can he absorb the power of Manny Pacquiao's power punches without collapsing into a heap?

Clottey's trainer Lenny Delman thinks so.

Delman said his ward has never been knocked out in his career and also did well against the 6-foot-1 Berrio, who has knocked out 20 of his

CLOTTEY, A-2

Aplus METRO
Editor Alexander S. Ulanday

DID YOU KNOW

FILIPINO women have a higher basic literacy rate than men (94.3 percent and 93.6 percent, respectively).
Cyril C. Bocobo, Inquirer Research

Man yields P4.5M worth of cocaine

Contraband taken from drug shipment dumped into sea by ship, says NBI

By Jeannette I. Andrade

AGENTS OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) have arrested a suspected member of an illegal drug syndicate who yielded some P4.5 million worth of cocaine.

At a press conference yesterday, NBI Director Nestor Mantaring identified the suspect as Dante Polarde Punto, 33, a resident of Ormoc City.

Mantaring said Punto was arrested on March 4 after he offered to sell a kilo of cocaine for P4.5 million to one of the bureau's informants.

He added that the informants and Punto initially agreed to meet in Biliran, Leyte, for the drug transaction but this was cancelled because the drug suspect said the cocaine was still in Catarman, Samar in the possession of his uncle, Boy de Dula.

Drugs buried

De Guia, according to the NBI, was supposedly one of several fishermen who were able to retrieve packages of cocaine off the coast of Samar after they were paralyzed by an unknown foreign ship.

Mantaring said that instead of surrendering the drugs to authorities, De Guia "buried sacks of cocaine in an islet in Catarman, Samar to shield them from the public eye and authorities."

Punto later told the informants to meet him in Samar where the drug transaction would take place.

On March 4, the two men met at the parking area of a bank in Catarman where a van pulled up. One of the vehicle's occupants then got out and gave Punto a package which contained sticks of cocaine.

Entrapment

When Punto gave the package to the informant, NBI agents surrounded him and arrested him. The van's occupants, however, immediately escaped.

Punto was later brought to Manila and detained at the NBI Jail.

He has been charged with violation of Republic Act 6425 or the Dangerous Drugs Act.

Mantaring, meanwhile, urged fishermen in Samar who were able to retrieve packages of cocaine from the sea to immediately surrender the drugs to authorities to avoid getting into trouble.

GAMES UNDER THE SUN
A woman lines up her shot as she plays gateball in Marinera, Tondo, her only protection from the sun an umbrella hat. Many people play the game, which is similar to croquet, at a plaza in the area.

Teen caught breaking into TV host's house

By Julie M. Aurelio

A 19-YEAR-OLD SCAVENGER is facing charges for breaking into the house of television host Julia Clarete before dawn yesterday in Quezon City.

Jinky Bonoza, a resident of Barangay Delos Santos, was apprehended by a government employee who was passing by the area and heard Clarete's housemaid screaming for help.

Supt. Edgardo Pantoloan, Galas police station commander, said Bonoza was discovered running on the grounds of the house owned by the "Eat Bulaga!" host on Bakete Drive, Barangay Marinera at around 2:50 a.m. yesterday.

Clarete's housemaid, Jenita Sacnan, 48, told the police that shortly before Bonoza was apprehended, she heard a noise, prompting her to look for the source.

She said she saw a man entering the house through a small window and screamed for help.

Bonoza got out of the house by going through the same window but as he was running on Clarete's property, a Quezon City Hall employee, Angelo Villanueva, collared him.

Police said they would file charges of trespass to dwelling and attempted robbery against Bonoza.

DOJ asks court to turn road rage suspect over to NBI

By Julie M. Aurelio

STATE PROSECUTORS have asked a Quezon City court to order the transfer of road rage suspect Jason Ivler to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) upon his discharge from a hospital where he is being treated for gunshot wounds.

In a four-page omnibus motion, the Department of Justice (DOJ) asked Judge Alexander Balisi of the Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 76 to issue cover letter to the NBI, saying the bureau would be able to provide him with medical attention should he require it.

"The NBI has [provisions] for wound care as they have a clinic with a doctor and nurse where assured one is committed," the DOJ motion filed yesterday said.

It added, however, is no longer in dire physical condition as his wounds at present require routine regular wound care that can be done on an outpatient basis."

The motion was expected to be taken up on Thursday morning, along with the results of a medical examination conducted on Ivler by Dr. Eloisa Ragasa of the National Kidney and Transplant Institute.

The DOJ earlier asked Ragasa, a government doctor and a fellow of the Philippine Society of Colorectal Surgeons, to check Ivler's medical condition to determine if he was fit to be discharged from Quirino Memorial Medical Center (QMMC).

Ivler is charged with murder for the death of Renato Victor Dante Jr. during a traffic altercation on Nov. 28 in Quezon City. He was arrested on Jan. 30 following a shoot-out with NBI agents at his mother's house in which he sustained two gunshot wounds.

He has been confined since then at QMMC although the lawyer of the Bicolano has been asking the court to order him transfer to the Quezon City jail, saying he was just acting out in order to prolong his stay at the hospital.

Dr. Romeo Abaya, his attending physician at QMMC, earlier told the court that Ragasa was going to examine Ivler last week upon the DOJ's request.

In a medical certificate submitted to the court, Ragasa said Ivler was now somewhere, coherent and his appearance stable during the examination conducted on March 5.

Why most Pinoys are poor

ON TARGET

RENNAT TAJO

GUN-FOR-HIRE SYNDICATES, which have been operating with impunity can only be stopped if the government forms a composite task force.

The task force should be composed of members of the Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the various intelligence units of the military.

There's no other time than now to form the task force since it's election season.

The services of gun-for-hire syndicates are being sought by some politicians against their rivals.

Will the government wait until a senator or congressman or a governor or candidate for political office gets assassinated before it acts?

* * *

Jeffrey Ibuganin, an agent of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), has been charged with illegal by retired Supreme Court Justice Dante Tinga whom he linked to illegal drugs.

The filed case stemmed from Ibuganin's allegation that Tinga and his son, Tagaig Mayor Imelda, influenced Ruiz Judge Raul Villanueva into dropping charges against Tinga relatives for drug peddling.

Ibuganin, who arrested Alberto and Fernando Tinga on a buy-bust operation, asked the Supreme Court to not reject.

I think she knows what I've been told about certain bishops and priests.

Despite their vow of chastity, some bishops and priests have fallen prey to the sins of the flesh—if that is a sin—and even have children.

I know of one bishop who impregnated his secretary and another who has two children who are now adults.

If these men of the cloth had used condoms, their sexual indiscretions would not have been exposed, and they would not have contributed to the country's population explosion.

Many priests are gay, and if they don't practice safe sex with their male partners, i.e. using condoms, they might contract HIV/AIDS.

It's high time the Catholic Church becomes practical.

* * *

Albay Gov. Joey Salceda, the President's economic adviser, says the rich have become richer and the poor poorer during President Gloria's reign.

Duh!

Duh is not in blame, but the poverty consciousness of most Pinoys who believe that God loves the poor and hates the rich.

And so, Pinoys choose to be poor because however they want to go to Heaven.

Tingas open to probe of narco-politics

By Mike Navalo

TAGUIG MAYOR SIGFRIDO "Freddie" Tinga yesterday welcomed an investigation into the issue of narco-politics after an agent of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) linked him and his father, retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Dante Tinga, to the dismissal of a drug case against three men said to be their relatives.

The mayor said that he and his father shared the same view—that the law must be applied to everyone regardless of "those bare names."

"We share the public's concern as we have also seen many of our drug arrests set free because of legal technicalities. We stand by the position that the law applies to everyone whatever their last names may be," he said in a statement.

The elder Tinga earlier ordered that the drug suspects who were arrested in the city in 2007 would be distant relatives of their family.

According to a PDEA agent, the mayor and his father used their influence on the judge who tried the case, leading to the dismissal of the case.

But allegation was denied by the judge, Mayor Tinga and his father.

The mayor, meanwhile, continued the public against taking sides on the issue, saying the "issuing [case] highly suggests...given its proximity to the election."

"Our political adversaries have time and again attempted to tie us to this issue despite our continued efforts against the drug menace," said the younger Tinga, who is running for Congress in May.

"We have always taken a strong position against the harmful menace of drug related crimes, just as we condemn any and against politicians who engage in dirty tactics such as this to serve their lack of accomplishment and their own disadvantages," he added.

A LOT OF SMOKE BUT WHERE'S THE FIRE! Smoke rises from the old Smokey Mountain in Manila, nearly hiding a woman making her way through a narrow pathway. RICHARD VIL

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Central Luzon Regional Office
Cabanatuan City

NOTICE OF AUCTION OF IMPORTED RICE SWEEPINGS/BROKEN RICE SWEEPINGS

The National Food Authority, Central Luzon Regional Office will conduct a Sidewalk Auction, Cabanatuan City, invites all interested and duly licensed/registered with National Food Authority to participate in the auction of 177 metric tons, more or less, Imported Rice/ Broken/Sweepings and Imported Sweepings stored in Warehouses in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija with the following terms and conditions to wit:

I. Material Quantity and Minimum Bid Price

Variety	QTY	Minimum Bid Price/kg
4 % Broken (BWR)	100.00	₱17.00/kg
4 % Broken (Thailand/Vietnam)	50.00	₱20.00/kg
5 % Broken (BWR)	20.00	₱20.00/kg
Imported Sweepings	7.00	₱10.00/kg
Total	177.00	

II. Schedule of Activities

Activity	Venue	Date	Time
Publication		March 6, 2010	
Inspection of Samples	NFA CLRO, Cabanatuan City	March 10, 2010	8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Opening of Bids	Cabanatuan City	March 12, 2010	10 A. M. to 2:00 PM
Auction Proper	NFA CLRO, Cabanatuan City	March 12, 2010	2:00 PM
Auction Proper	---do---	March 13, 2010	2:00 PM

III. Other Conditions

a. Volume and the Reserve Price
The offer shall be for the whole lot or total volume in CY. metric tons, more or less, per "MS-09-SWP-001" and "MS-09-BWR-001" with a minimum bid price per kilo as indicated in the table hereof. Bid offers lower than the minimum bid price shall automatically be disqualified.

b. Inspection of Stocks
Prospective bidders have the option to inspect the stocks at the warehouse but drawing or taking out of samples is prohibited. Inspection of the stocks shall be on regular working days from March 10 to 11, 2010, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

C. Submission of Pre-Qualification documents and Payment of Auction Fees

1. Only legitimate businessmen who are duly licensed/registered with the National Food Authority as of December 31, 2009, and who have paid the non-refundable auction fee of ₱5,000.00 are qualified to participate in the auction sale. Proof of payment shall be presented to the Cashier, Central Luzon Regional Office.

2. Interested bidders shall submit the original and one (1) photocopy of the following documents:

a.) Letter of intent to participate signed by owner;
b.) NFA acknowledgement letter or letter and copy of official receipt;
c.) Commercial/Valid Mayor's Permit;
d.) Sworn statement that the prospective buyer has an existing grain milling facilities and currently licensed with NFA and operating as miller/rice mill;
e.) For the authorized representatives, duly notarized Special Power of Attorney (SPA), if sale is participated by representative, and Board Resolution, if participated by corporation, partnership, including therein the name and specimen signature of the representative authorizing the same to transact business in behalf of the owner/company or make payments, sign tender form and NFA warehouse documents, withdrawal of stocks and other activities.

3. Interested bidders who failed to participate in the auction on March 12, 2010 will have the chance to participate in the succeeding schedules of auction and to purchase auction documents upon presentation of the pre-qualification documents and payment of the non-refundable auction fee. However, however that this is done before the bids of the auction proper.

4. Schedules of auction shall be on March 17 and 19, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. with above rules been observed. Venue shall be at the NFA Central Luzon Regional Office (CLRO), Cabanatuan Road, Barangay Sangitan, Cabanatuan City.

a.) Interested buyers for the above mentioned re-auction sale shall be required to pay another auction fee of ₱5,000.00. Pre-auction will be at 10:00 a.m. and auction proper shall be at exactly at 2:00 p.m. Interested/ potential parties can buy auction documents and 0 DAYS prior to the bidding day at the NFA CLRO, Auction Secretariat, 2nd Floor, Mabanika Highway, Cabanatuan City.

b.) The Auction Committee shall acknowledge the qualification of the prospective buyer and recommend pre-qualified buyers to participate in the re-auction sale proper.

The auction documents to be purchased by the Terms of Reference, Auction Rules, and Deed of Conditional Sale. For further inquiries, please contact the Secretariat at telephone numbers (044) 600-0170, (044) 463-7168 and (044) 600-2598.

NFA reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids. It reserves any deficiency of ₱5,000.00 Auction Bond thereon and accepted only upon valid reason in the judgement the most reasonable and advantageous to NFA. The decision of the NFA Regional Inspection Committee, as conformed by the Regional Director, shall be deemed final.

(Sgd.) ANGEL G. IMPERIAL, JR.
Assistant Regional Director
Chairperson, NFA CLR Auction Committee

Makati City boosts drive against spread of measles

By Miko Morales

THE MAKATI HEALTH DEPARTMENT has intensified its campaign against the spread of measles in the city, going on a house-to-house drive in different barangays to monitor cases and immunize children against the disease.

City health chief Dr. Ma. Lourdes Sobel said in a statement that teams had been formed to go to areas where cases had been reported.

"We are on active surveillance mode but we are also appealing to all parents to immediately bring their children to the nearest health center or hospital the moment they show measles-like symptoms, including high fever," she said.

Sobel said that of the 23 cases reported in the city, only one has been confirmed based on tests done at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine where blood samples tested positive for measles.

The victim, a 1-year-old girl who had not been vaccinated against the disease, was recovering upon receiving proper medical attention.

Sobel said the city had been able to reduce the number of cases in the city through its anti-measles campaign dubbed "Lipilan Tigdas," to a result. Only 189 cases in 2003, only four cases were reported last year based on records.

"We are getting closer to our goal of eradicating measles and we are confident that through intensified immunization drive and strict monitoring, we will be able to prevent the disease from spreading in Makati on a larger scale," she said.

Last month, the Department of Health warned the public against a nationwide measles outbreak following an above normal increase in the number of cases reported in just one month.

Officials attributed the hike in cases in neighboring provinces due to the El Niño phenomenon.

Measles is a contagious disease, affecting mostly children. Initial symptoms include high fever, runny nose, bloodshot eyes and tiny white spots on the walls of the mouth. Rashes on the skin also develop after seven of days.

METROBRIEFS

Woman hangs self after fight with boyfriend

A WOMAN killed herself inside her rented room over the weekend in Quezon City allegedly following a fight with her boyfriend. The body of Liberyn Despojo, 25, a resident of Sitio Bay Subdivision in Barangay Bagong, was found at around 9 a.m. on Sunday. Case investigator PO3 Randy Guerrilla of the Quezon City Police District's Criminal Investigation Detection Unit said relatives found Despojo hanging by her neck from a beam near the entrance to her room by her boyfriend, 19-year-old Felix Bo Adao. He told the police that he had just arrived from his parents' house in Bulacan when he sought refuge after he and Despojo argued on Saturday afternoon. Police said Adao did not say what he and the victim had argued about. Julie M. Aurelio

Trader dies of hack wounds

A BUSINESSMAN who had worked as employee was killed by the latter's friend in Muntinlupa City yesterday morning. Police identified the victim as Cecilio Bitanondo, 54, owner of the Bulacan Bar on East Service Road in Barangay Alabang, where the attack occurred at around 4 a.m. Initial investigation showed that the victim had confronted one of his workers identified as Dante Galicia, a stay-in employee at the bar. Galicia fired at Bitanondo with his friend, identified only as "Dadong." The police said that when Dadong gave Bitanondo a stabbing Galicia, he went up to their room and came back with a jungle bolo. Galicia allegedly held the victim while Dadong hacked him in the neck. The two men then escaped while Bitanondo was taken to the Ospital ng Muntinlupa where he died while undergoing treatment. Alilio Morales

Man shot dead on train tracks

AN UNIDENTIFIED man died after he was shot in the face at point-blank range before dawn yesterday on the railroad tracks in Sampaloc, Manila. Manila Police District homicide investigators described the man as between 40 and 50 years old and 5'6" tall. His body was found sprawled across the Philippine National Railways tracks near Antipolo Street in Sampaloc. Case investigator PO01 Jaime Panganiban said that when the body was found at around 3:10 a.m. yesterday, barangay watchmen heard a single gunshot. Panganiban said that when barangay tanods investigated the source of the sound, they discovered the victim. They immediately brought him to the Ospital ng Sampaloc but he was pronounced dead on arrival by attending doctors. Jeannette I. Andrade

Manila gov't offering loans to drivers

THE MANILA City government is giving tricycle and pedicab drivers a chance to own their own vehicles. Mayor Alfredo Lim said in a statement that the project "would enable current drivers of these unlisted vehicles to own their own units and do away with the boundary which they are required to remit to operators or the real owners of the units they drive." The undertaking, a joint project of the city government's Public Order and Safety Office and the Manila Treasurer's Office, is targeting the initial 40 units. Lim appealed to the beneficiaries to fulfill their obligations so that others may also profit from this project. "We have done away with the necessity of paying the boundary fees but the tricycle drivers must make sure that they pay for the unit so that others may benefit from the project as well. If they can pay before the three-year period, it would be better," the mayor said. Jeannette I. Andrade

Pope's brother willing to testify in German church sex scandal

ROME – THE BROTHER OF Pope Benedict XVI has told a newspaper he is willing to testify in the sex scandal rocking Germany's Catholic Church, even though he says he knows nothing about the alleged abuse of boys in a choir he later led.

The Rev. Georg Ratzinger, in an interview published on Sunday, also was quoted as saying by the Rome daily La Repubblica that there was "discipline and rigor" but no severe abuing in his 18 years as head of the Regensburger Domspatzen choir in Germany.

The Regensburg Diocese said late last week that a former singer came forward with allegations of sexual abuse in the early 1960s. The German news weekly Der Spiegel has reported that disruptive in the region are suspected in several alleged victims from the choir.

Ratzinger led the choir from 1964 to 1994.

The diocese has said it is hiring a lawyer to help it carry out a "systematic" clarification of abuse allegations.

A nun who lived in the choir-linked boarding school until 1967 has contended that "a sophisticated system of deficits [punishments] in connection with sexual food" had been installed there. Der Spiegel quoted the nun, Irene Fuhrmbacher, as saying it would be inexplicable that the boys' bodies didn't know anything about it.

But Ratzinger says he knew nothing about any alleged abuse.

If Cbs says another suffered, "tell me to give testimony, obviously I'd be very ready to do so, but I am not able to provide any information on any deed that would be punished, because I don't have any. I never knew anything about it," the former choir leader told La Repubblica.

"We're talking about another generation, of another generation than that of my time, and respect to the generation that leads the foundation and choose none" the Pope's brother told the paper.

Asked why cases of alleged abuse were "covered by silence" for so long, Ratzinger replied: "I insist. I wasn't involved in that situation, I wasn't at the choir when the cases they're talking about happened."

"I hope our church can be energized by this situation, but it's in my interest first light is shed on it," he added.

Asked by La Repubblica about various claims of "disproportion in the whole," Ratzinger was quoted as saying: "In my years, than after these deeds, there was a climate of discipline and rigor, that was obvious, too—we were among boys a high-minded, serious level."

He said there was "a climate of honest, exacting relationships, almost like a family."

The Pope's brother also was asked what was behind the recent allegations.

"I want to note that I sense a certain animosity toward the church" behind the scandal, Ratzinger was quoted as saying.

Also on Sunday, a prominent German Catholic activist group called on the Pope to explain what he knew about abuses. Christian Pfeiffer, the spokesperson for Before the Church, told the Associated Press on Sunday that Benedict must address whether there was abuse during his time as bishop of Munich and Freising between 1977 and 1982.

The Vatican said on Sunday that it backed the diocese's efforts to look into the "painful questions in a decisive and open way."

Benedict has made no public comment on the clerk scandal in his homeland, where the church has been rocked by abuse allegations in more than 170 former students who studied at some of the country's most prominent Catholic schools. AP

Wastong Nutrisyon:
Alamin. Gawin at Palaganapin
Teach your children to be smart snackers.
Set a schedule for meals and snacks. If kids are allowed to nibble all day without a schedule, they may lose the ability to detect their own hunger and fullness, which can make them more likely to overeat.
PAGKAIN SA BAWAT MESA

THE LATE Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi is credited photo

India parliament eyes reserving one-third of its seats for women

NEW DELHI—INDIA'S PARLIAMENT MAY vote on Monday on a landmark bill reserving one-third of seats for women, with the government confident it can pass the legislation that has been stalled for 14 years.

The Women Reservation Bill is to be introduced in the upper house on Monday, International Women's Day, before being considered by the debate-making lower house on a later date.

"We will table the bill in the upper house today," Congress party leader Oscillator told AFP. "The bill is passed [we will move to the] lower house." The controversial proposal to reserve 33 percent of seats, first introduced in parliament in 1996, would dramatically increase women's membership in both houses of parliament where they occupy about one in 10 seats.

The legislation needs the approval of two-thirds of legislators. If passed, women would occupy 181 of the 545 seats in the lower house.

"Our government is committed towards women empowerment. We are moving towards one third reservation for women in parliament and state legislatures," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told a women's leadership summit on Saturday.

The bill has the backing of the Congress-led ruling coalition and the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Several regional parties want to separate a quota that if passed it would lead to upper-caste, not lower-caste, women in parliament. Attempts to pass the bill have been blocked by various political groups who demanded separate quotas for women from Muslim and low-caste communities. AFP

6-magnitude quake hits Turkey; at least 41 dead

ELAZIG, TURKEY—A STRONG earthquake, with a preliminary magnitude of 6, hit eastern Turkey on Monday killing at least 41 people and knocking down houses in at least six small villages, the government said.

The quake affected villages near the town of Sivrice, 60 kilometers (40 miles) southwest of Elazig, and was followed by more than 100 aftershocks, the strongest measuring 5.1, the Kandilli seismology center said.

Emergency workers were trying to rescue four people from debris, Gov. Mesut Hancer said. CNN-Turk television said the dead included four young sisters trapped in the rubble.

"Everything has been knocked down, there is not a stone in place," said Nadir Aparchi, administrator for the village of Yakuri himself, where he said at least three villagers died.

And Sevket Hocaoglu moves to Okvalar village, to see where the story and rest of embodiment and rescue teams on the village's narrow roads. Relatives rushed to the village the news of their loved ones.

"The village is totally flattened," Okvalar's administrator Hasan Demirelog told private NTV television.

The quake was felt in the neighboring provinces of Tunceli, Bingol and Bayburtan where residents fled to the streets to panic and spent the night outdoors.

Scenes of the injuries occurred during the panic when people jumped from windows or balconies. Dogan news agency for large showed people fleeing to the injured to hospitals by cars and vans. AP

Pakistan nabs 'American al-Qaida spokesperson'

KARACHI—PAKISTAN'S SECURITY agents have arrested an American al-Qaida spokesperson wanted in the United States for treason, because he threatened violence unless al-Qaida demands were met, Pakistani officials said on Sunday.

Many of the arrest of Adam Gadahn, a California-born convert to Islam, came the day a video was released in which he called on Muslims in the US to launch attacks in protection the economy, according to a website monitoring al-Qaida announcements.

The capture of Gadahn, believed to be in his early 30s, is the latest in a series of militant arrests in US ally Pakistan that has risked hopes for more concerted action against the region Taliban and al-Qaida in US forces hostile militants over the border in Afghanistan.

Gadahn's two from involved with al-Qaida's an Salafi media wing and has appeared in al-Qaida videos wearing robes and a turban and warning the US that it would face attacks if it does not heed al-Qaida demands.

In the video posted on Islamist websites on Sunday, Gadahn praises Nidal Hasan, the US army doctor who killed 13 people at Fort Hood, an army base in Texas, in November, according to the SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors al-Qaida announcements.

GADAHN 9/11

He called on Muslims in "lands dominated the West's already-struggling economies with cost-killing [attacks] and [to] target the US Treasury and Stock Exchange, which is the artery of the US economy."

WORLD BRIEFS

500 killed in central Nigeria clashes

LAGOS—At least 500 people were killed on Sunday in communal violence near Nigeria's central city of Jos, a state government adviser said on Monday, marking a previous toll of around 400 dead. The latest clash in the state left another 200 injured. "Over 500 people have been killed in this bloodbath," Dan Manjang said in a telephone interview. Nigeria's ruling president put security forces on alert after machete-wielding gangs massacred elderly women and children in Jos, officials said. Witnesses described how victims were caught in communal traps and fleeing until as they tried to flee their attackers, who lacked their destination. A rebel spokesman in the area a week organized attack. AFP

Powerful car bomb blast kills 11 in Pakistan

LAHORE, Pakistan—A powerful car bomb struck a law enforcement building used by intelligence suspected militants in the Pakistani city of Lahore on Monday, killing 11 people and wounding more than 80. There were scenes of major destruction in Pakistan's second biggest city when volunteers dug under the rubble of the building and a flare-up in Muslim sanctuary for survivors by several rescue crafts. Police said the target was a field investigation building used to take agents suspected of militant attacks. Police said the explosion could explain whether many of militant attacks has targeted security forces. AFP

Iran begins production of cruise missiles

TEHRAN, Iran—Iran announced on Sunday that it has started a mass production line of flying accurate, short-range cruise missiles, which could add a new element to the country's already imposing arsenal. Gen. Ahmad Vahidi told Iranian state TV that the cruise missile, called Nasr-1, would be capable of striking targets up to 1,000 feet in the air. The minister said the missile could be fired from ground-based launchers as well as ships, but would be eventually be modified to be fired from helicopters and submarines. Western powers are already concerned about Iran's military capabilities, especially from publication of its nuclear program. The US and some of its allies, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency, fear Iran is trying to produce nuclear weapons, a charge Iran denies. AP

US troops withdrawing en masse from Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—US troops are withdrawing from the shattered capital, leaving many Haitians anxious that the most visible portion of international aid is ending even as the city is still mired in misery and unbearable to unrest. As troops packed their duffels and began to fly home this weekend, Haitians and some aid workers wondered whether UN peacekeepers and local police were up to the task of maintaining order. AP

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
6/F DOLE-NCR Building, 1007 Intramuros St., Manila, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEPS)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Nationality	Position
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozo

Burma junta quietly selling state assets

RANGOON—BURMA'S MILITARY GOVERNment has quietly begun the largest sell-off of state assets in the country's history, including more than 100 government buildings, port facilities and a large stake in the national airline, diplomats and businessmen here say.

The sell-off, analysts say, appears to be part of a political maneuver as the government introduces elections for the first time in 20 years and a new constitution under which the military seems likely to perpetuate its rule, though cuts from behind the scenes.

Diplomats and businessmen say that the sales may allow ruling generals to build up cash for election campaigns in the new parliament, where they will hold 25 percent of seats, or to pay for salary increases for civil servants and other populist measures. Many of the assets are being sold to businessmen allied with the military, reinforcing the strength of a class of oligarchs and military cronies.

But the privatizations could also harm the effort of injecting some competition into a tightly controlled, Soviet-style economic system, and some analysts here say they may herald a shift in direction.

The military junta of Burma (also known as Myanmar) nationalized most industries when it took power in a 1962 coup and has controlled the lion's share of the economy since. "There's something of a grab going on," said one diplomat who declined to be identified because he wanted to avoid publicly criticizing the junta.

The assets being sold include the country's fuel import and distribution network, gem and tin mines, farmland and factories, according to businessmen who have seen announcements of the sales. Most of the announcements have been made to small groups of businessmen and then spread by word of mouth.

The government is also opening the health care and education sectors to private enterprise, according to U Phone Myo, the head of a nonprofit organization that assists people in rural areas, issuing licenses for the first time for private hospitals and schools. In recent days, the country's Privatization Commission published a list of 176 assets in Yangon, the main city, to be auctioned off sometime over the next few weeks. The 19-page list includes a roster of buildings in Rangoon (Yangon) worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

The list, which covers only part of the privatization plan, features many former government offices, notably the national archives, the textile generals headquarters, the archaeology department and the Ministry of Industry. The buildings were abandoned when the capital was moved to the remote mountain fortress of Naypyidaw in 2005. AFP

Vote for your favorite Sooo Pinoy Dish and get a chance to win exciting prizes.

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Voting Mechanics of choosing your favorite Sooo Pinoy Dish:

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1. Log on to www.inquirer.net
2. Click the Sooo Pinoy button
3. Click the image of your favorite Pinoy dish
4. Key in your name, age, address, mobile number
5. The more votes you send, the more chances of winning exciting prizes
6. Participants can win only once.

SMS Mechanics
1. The is open to all Smart, Globe and Sun Cellular subscribers
2. Choose your favorite Pinoy dish : (1) Chicken Inasal (2) Sinigang na Hipon (3) Pancit Canton (4) Pinakbet (5) Adobo (6) Crispy Pata (7) Bulalo (8) Daing na Bangus (9) Sisig (10) Kare-kare
3. Text: DAP <space> corresponding # <space> name/age/city send to 3467.
4. The more votes you send, the more chances of winning exciting prizes.
5. Participants can win only once.

Weekly winners will be chosen thru electronic raffle from the merged names of SMS and online voters.

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Blasts shake Baghdad as Iraqis vote in key election

BAGHDAD—(REPEAT) A HUNDRED BARrage of mortars and rockets in Baghdad and other cities, Iraqis went to the polls in strength on Sunday to choose a new parliament meant to confirm the US military presence here.

"Iraqis are sick and tired of having occupiers," said Mahg Bichael, 45, defiantly waving his finger stained with purple ink to indicate he had voted, as he stood near the rubble of an apartment building in Baghdad hit by a huge rocket in the deadliest attack of the day.

Insurgents have vowed to disrupt the election, and the concerted wave of attacks—as many as 100 thunderous blasts in the capital alone starting just before the polls opened—did frighten voters away but only initially. The struggling response of voters could signal a fundamental weakening of the insurgency's powers. At least 38 people were killed in Baghdad; that by day's end, voter turnout was reported to be higher than expected, and certainly higher than in the last parliamentary election in 2005, marred by widespread violence.

Iraqis who largely boycotted previous elections voted in force, and an intense competition for Shiite votes drove up participation in Baghdad and the south, election observers said.

The short and fierce political campaign could end up either solidifying Iraqi nascent democracy or leaving the country fractured along ethnic and sectarian lines. But it was arguably the most open, most competitive election in the nation's long history of colonial rule, dictatorship and war.

The election took place with only a few reports of ballot irregularities. And by Sunday night, something rare was emerging in a region dominated by authoritarian governments: An election in Baghdad.

Official results are not expected for days, but after the polls closed at 3 p.m., party leaders said two coalitions seemed to have fared best. The one led by Prime Minister Nouri Kamal al-Maliki, who has campaigned for a second term on improved security in Iraq, and another led by the former interim leader, Ayad Allawi, who has promised to overcome Iraq's sectarian divides.

As expected, neither coalition appeared to have secured an outright majority of seats in the country's new 325-member parliament, and so it was unclear whether al-Maliki had succeeded in winning another four years in office. AFP

India, China 'missing' 85M women—UN

NEW DELHI—THE UNITED NATIONS ESTImated on Monday that India and China are "missing" about 85 million women who died from discriminatory health care and neglect or who were never born at all.

In a major report on gender equality, the UN Development Program (UNDP) found that Asia had the highest male-female sex ratio at birth in the world, with 119 boys born for every 100 girls.

This far exceeded the global world average of 107 boys for every 100 girls.

"Females cannot take survival for granted," the report said. "Sex-selective abortion, infanticide and death from health and nutritional neglect in Asia have left 96 million missing women—and the numbers seem to be increasing in absolute terms," it added.

The regional figure was skewed by enormous birth-gender disparities in China and India, which each accounted for about 42.6 million of the report's "missing" figure.

Despite robust economic growth across Asia as a whole, the report found that millions of women remained excluded from the benefits of greater prosperity. AFP

Editor Raul G. Marcelo ■ Assistant Editor Carrie S. Nemeno

BUSINESS

Gokongwei's Cebu Pacific to go public

IPO seen raising as much as ₱12B for budget airline

By Paolo G. Montecillo

BUDGET CARRIER CEBU PACIFIC YESTERDAY announced plans to raise about P12 billion through the sale of new shares to the public.

Cebu Air Inc., the company that operates the Cebu Pacific airline, said it planned to list 120.28 million new common shares through an initial public offering (IPO). At the maximum offer price of P99 each set by the company, the new shares are valued at close to P12 billion.

The company also said that it had asked the Securities and Exchange Commission to approve its request to list an additional 1.16 million existing shares at the same price.

SHAREHOLDER'S, B4

IN THIS ISSUE

■ **Ayala holding firm** posted net profit of P8.2B in 2009 /B2

■ **PNOC-EC to start** Isabela project /B3

■ **T-bill rates decline** across the board /B5

San Miguel unit acquires coal miner

By Doris C. Dumlao

DIVERSIFYING CONGLOMERATE San Miguel Corp. has gained a foothold in the mining industry with a recent deal to acquire 100 percent of Dagupan Agro Minerals Inc., a mining firm with development and production rights to coal-rich Lake Intex, South Cotabato.

The takeover of the mining project is in line with San Miguel's plans to put up a coal-fired power plant in General Santos City as another power crisis looms due to the shortage of additional power-generating capacity given the rising demand.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, San Miguel said it had acquired 100 percent of the outstanding stocks of Dagupan for its energy subsidiary San Miguel Energy Corp. (SMEnergy).

"SMEnergy contemplates to maximize the utilization of the coal deposits of Dagupan in South Cotabato and to presently evaluating the viability of constructing and operating a 220- to 260-

SAN MIGUEL, B3

Shares close higher

LOCAL STOCKS OPENED THE WEEK ON an upbeat mood due to sustained global investor optimism as reflected by the three-week rally on Wall Street.

The main index Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 20.01 points, or 0.83 percent to close at 3,004.69.

The market initially succumbed to some profit-taking, but bargain-hunters dominated until the closing bell, mostly benefiting the financial, industrial and holding firms whose sub-indices rose 1.28 percent, 1.21 percent and 1.88 percent, respectively.

Only the property sector showed some weaknesses closing the session due to some technical correction.

STOCKS, B2

Ayala holding firm posted net profit of P8.2B in 2009

By Doris C. Dumlao

CONGLOMERATE AYALA CORP. posted a net profit of P8.2 billion in 2009, at par with the level a year ago as it booked lower capital gains from share sales here year compared to the previous year.

Excluding capital gains, its core net income grew 24 percent last year, driven by the strong performance of its major business units—not as the company narrowly escaped a recession last year. Ayala reported to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday its total equity share in the earnings of its business units grew 38 percent to P9.2 billion from a year ago.

In 2009, the conglomerate booked about P8.1 billion in net income attributable to equity holders.

"Our efforts the past few years to strengthen our balance sheet prepared us well for the economic downturn. Our healthy cash position and core profit, which included gains from a lot sale, including the impact of the lot sale, net income was down only 2 percent.

Globe Telecom registered an 11-percent earnings growth to P12.6 billion over a year ago, while its core mobile business saw weighted down by intense competition, a slow-made significant gains in its broadband business.

AC Capital also contributed positively in 2009, reversing the loss in 2008. This was driven by the strong earnings growth of water distribution unit Manila Water Co. Inc., the consolidation of electricity distribution business Integrated Microelectronics Inc. (IMI), and the significantly improved performance of Ayala's holding company for its BPO investments.

Manila Water posted a net income of P5.2 billion, 34 percent higher than in 2008. Electronic manufacturing services unit IMI posted a consolidated net income, a reversal of the net loss in 2008.

Yearend cash holdings reached P30B

Notable soaring kept fundamentals in our across the group," Ayala president and chief operating officer Fernando Zobel de Ayala said in a statement.

Ayala ended 2009 with cash of P30 billion. Net debt was at only P8.04 for every P1 of equity. It recently secured plans to diversify into the power generation business with its investment to bid for the Angat hydroelectric plant in partnership with First Philippine Co. Ltd. of Hong Kong.

In real estate, Ayala Land's residential sales recovered beginning the second quarter with take-up rates impacting through the fourth quarter. Ayala Land posted P4 billion in net income in 2009, 14 percent lower than the previous

PSEi's 3,133 mark

AS OF PRESS TIME, THE PSEi'S 3,133 PSEi'D. Capital mark has remained technically to be the market's price index level to break. It was established on Jan. 15 this year.

Previous to this, the market's high was 3,130. It was set on Dec. 2, 2009.

In practical terms, these index figures are statistically the same in value and function. They have no significant difference as the market's resistance indicators then and now, or vice-versa.

This brings us to the notion that the market is possibly following a price pattern that will only make sense when you look at the bigger picture—which, incidentally, downplays the importance of PSEi's 3,133 mark.

Market review

In retrospect, December was a big let-down. Trading failed to come up with the so-called Santa Claus rally that usually sent market prices higher during the season. The market never got the chance to climb any higher when the PSEi peaked at the 3,520 level on Dec. 11 and closed for the month at no more than 50 points

MARKET RIDER

Dete Soriano

above the 3,000 index.

This was followed by trading in January that came in the form of a market trying to rebound. However, like how it was in December, the market posted persistently at the 3,133 level on Jan. 15. After which, it was downhill up to the end of January, rendering it to be another disappointing month as it closed lower by 30 points below the 3,000 level or some 80 points from the previous month's closing index.

The market was sliding lower when the month of February set in and it was not until the market had fallen lower by another 50 points from January's closing index when it reached the 2,849.40 depth on Feb. 10. This proved to be the market's bottom.

The momentum of the recovery was relatively strong such that by the end of the month, it was able to recover all lost ground below the 3,000 mark to close at 3,043.71 on Feb. 26.

Since then and up to last week, the peaks attained by the market during all those times continued to serve as intermediate resistance points. The bottom hit, on the other hand, continued to serve as the market's main support level. In the meantime, PSEi's 3,133 level remains to be the major resistance point. Or so it seems.

More recent angle

As of the close of trading on March 5, the market stood at the 3,069.61 mark. It is 246.23 points away from its lowest established bottom. It is also only 63.37 points away from the historical breakout mark of 3,133—which, for all technical intensive intents and purposes, the market is going to be the market's more Dec., 2, 2009.

In connection with the upbeat technical results on Wall Street and elsewhere the world over last Friday, the market is poised to retest PSEi's 3,133. Set based on obtaining technical studies...the market is trading in oversold territory, which implies that

StarTek hiring more

By Abigail L. Ho

BUSINESS PROCESS OUTsourcing firm StarTek Inc. is adding another 1,000 people to its workforce, to fill up seats at its planned 2,100-seat facility in the Clarkfield area.

In a statement, the company said its second Philippine site, located at the Hacienda Luisita mall, should be operational by the third quarter.

StarTek's first site is a 1,300-seat facility in Makati City which is expected to be filled to capacity very soon.

"StarTek has experienced significant growth in our Makati site. New program customization requires telecommunications clients and new business opportunities have resulted to our expansion plans," said industry veteran Saul Spiro, who has been appointed to lead operations at the new site.

"The new facility will rest over 2,100 agents and we are currently recruiting for over 1,000 new employee positions to start running by August," he added.

In an earlier interview, StarTek president and chief executive Larry Jones said StarTek's investment in the second site should amount to around P6-million.

StarTek has around 9,000 seats spread over 28 sites in the United States, Canada, Costa Rica and the Philippines, with agents providing high-value voice and nonvoice services to its clients.

PNOC-EC to start Isabela project

Firm gets ECC for P1-B coal-fired power plant

By Amy R. Remo

PNOC EXPLORATION CORP. IS SET TO BEgin soon the engineering studies for its 50-megawatt (MW) environment, coal-fired power plant in Kawayan, Isabela, as it recently secured some of the major permits needed for the project.

In an interview, PNOC-EC president Rafael del Pilar said the company had already obtained the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) for the P1 billion coal facility. This allows the company to push forward the proposed power project.

Del Pilar said PNOC-EC was now working on securing other permits from concerned local governments.

According to Lozano, PNOC-EC targets to have all the necessary permits and complete the engineering studies by the end of the year. This would allow PNOC-EC, the upstream oil and gas subsidiary of state-owned Philippine National Oil Co., to start construction soon and begin commercial operations by late 2014.

The engineering studies for the coal-fired power plant would cover the design of the facility, the specifications of the generators needed and the details of the equipment to be purchased.

The source earlier said San Miguel Corp. was interested in the coal project since it had a related business to the work. However, there was no following on the project by SMC from the initial talks held between the company and PNOC-EC last year.

So far, PNOC-EC is proceeding with the project on its own but it is still open to joint venture agreements or partnerships since the project requires huge investments, the source said.

PNOC-EC chair Jaime Ros earlier said the company was in talks with three local firms that have foreign partners. He, however, declined to name them.

Ros said PNOC-EC predicted to have a capacity stake in the proposed power plant if a partner would be taken in.

PNOC-EC wanted to put up the power plant in Isabela since it was "trying to fit in low-grade coal to a new power plant that would accept that kind of coal quality," according to Ros.

Should the project push through, he said the company was considering jacking up the capacity of the proposed plant to 400 MW.

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RLC launches condo community in Sucat

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE LONDON RIVER PROPERTY development arm, Robinsons Land Corp., launched its affordable residential property business with the offerings of a new eight-tower medium-rise condominium community in Sucat, Muntinlupa.

The new project, called The Residences South Metro (RSM), will be under the Robinsons Condominium brand; it will cater to people working the suburban lifestyle.

It is expected to generate P1.3 billion from the sale of about a thousand residential units over a six-year period.

RSM aims to offer residential units that are affordable to people who can shell out P6,000 to P20,000 in monthly amortization, making it an attractive alternative to renting living space, RLC officials said in a briefing yesterday.

Buyers are required to put up an equity equivalent to 20 percent of the unit.

A 20-square meter studio unit will cost about P1.1 million, while a 45-square meter two-bedroom unit will be priced at about P2.4 million.

Each tower will have 11 elevators with 13 residential units on each floor.

The company will soon begin the construction of the first tower, with the tie-tower scheduled for the 3rd quarter of next year.

At present, the affordable property segment accounts for less than 20 percent of RLC's total sales. Residential developments, however, expect that contribution from this segment will rise to about 20 to 25 percent of new business this year. RLC vice president for operations Christopher Ibarra said.

For this year alone, RLC is targeting to sell about 600 to 650 RSM units.

RLC president Frederick Go said the Robinsons Commercial brand was "for people who want suburban living, which means a more quiet, more tranquil environment."

RSM comes with condominium lifestyle features such as a clubhouse, lap pool for adults, kiddie pool, landscape plaza and standby power generator.

Forum Energy earmarks $15M for seismic survey

LAPU-LAPU CITY, CEBU—UK-based Forum Energy Plc plans to spend as much as $15 million to conduct a 3-D seismic survey within the Reed Bank basin in offshore Palawan.

Forum Energy chief executive Walter W. Brown said the firm intends to undertake the 3-D survey prior to drilling a well under Service Contract 72.

A three-dimensional survey would allow the company to have a comprehensive understanding of the service contract area and the various kinds and prospects in it, to purposes use for future drilling activities.

Depending on the availability of the seismic vessel, Brown said the company was targeting to conduct the 3-D survey either within a year or two.

Brown also said the company was planning to conduct the survey on its own. In the drilling phase, however, it intends to bring in partners.

Forum Energy said it planned to drill an exploration well over the next 18 months and acquire at least 250 sq.km. of 3D seismic data in the first subphase of exploration under SC 72. The initial exploration period has a term of seven years and is subdivided into four sub-phases. According to the firm's work program, Forum Energy plans to spend as much as $20 million within the seven-year exploration period. Amy R. Remo

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From page B1

San Miguel unit acquires coal miner

...megawatt mine-mouth power plant in the vicinity of General Santos City" the disclosure said.

The Dagonoy coal project holds a 2,800-hectare license area with a potential coal reserve of 304 million metric tons. The coal quality in the project is of medium calorific value and is deemed suitable for export to markets like India and China as well as for local power generation and other industrial purposes like cement manufacturing.

It was earlier reported that San Miguel would have to invest as much as $1 million to produce one megawatt from coal resources. This means that for a 500-MW project, San Miguel would need to invest $500 million or about P23.5 billion.

San Miguel acquired the coal mine because it was believed to have enough reserves to enable the company's planned power facilities to provide the Mindanao grid as much as 1,000 MW a year.

The Dagonoy coal project underlost to strategic British investor, Cora Gold Corp., allegedly due to mere community opposition to the project.

Shares close higher

From page B1

...about 29.76 billion worth of stocks were traded at the local bourse. There were 76 advanced against 34 declines, while 71 stocks were unchanged.

Advances were made by SM Investments Corp., Megaworld Corp., Metro Pacific Investments Corp., Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., Ayala Corp., Universal Robina Corp., Bank of the Philippine Islands, First Gen Corp., SMC, Allied Industries Inc., International Container Terminal Services Inc., Manila Electric Co., and Alaska Aquafeeds Corp.

PLDT was unchanged at P2,675 a share. Boris C. Dumlao

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Warning against fraud, PDIC denies more deposit claims

mobile news

Rotating blackouts in Luzon may ease following completion of repairs at Sual plant, says Nat'l Grid Corp. However, Masinloc plant repairs expected to continue till Sunday so outages still possible.

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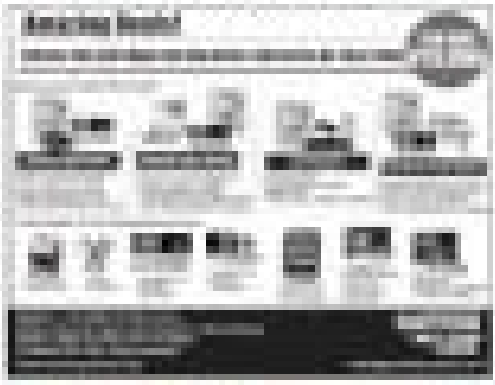

Exporters urged to focus more on China, Africa

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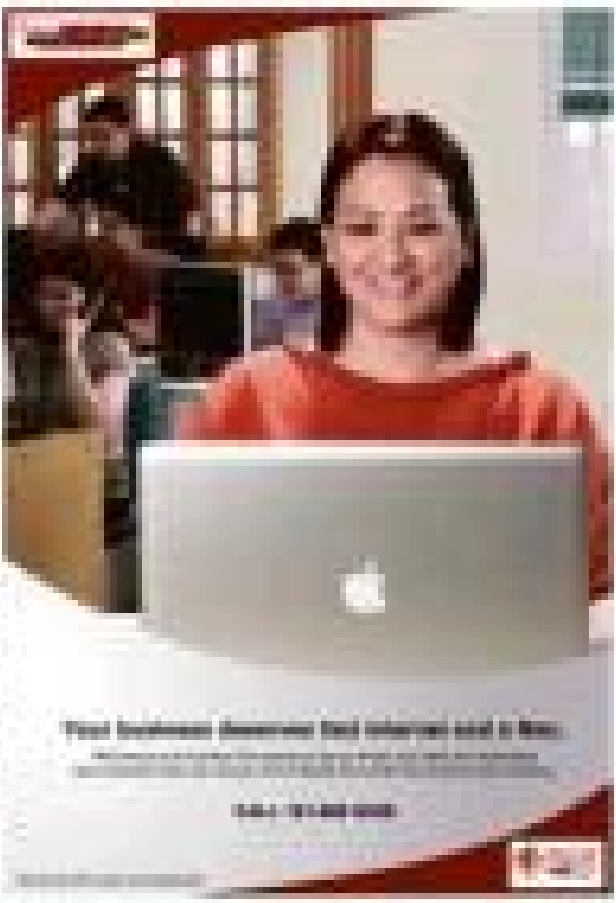

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BUSINESS

Asian stocks up as US data lift recovery hopes

A MAN walks in front of an electronic share price board at a securities firm in Tokyo. Japanese stocks closed up 2.09 percent on March 8, rallying a six-week high on the back of US market gains. AP

Major markets add as much as 2% during trade

HONG KONG—ASIAN STOCKS gained Monday as a better-than-expected report about the US job market lifted confidence in the economic recovery.

Major markets added as much as 2 percent during trading.

The euro got a boost after France voiced support for debt-laden Greece, while oil prices edged toward $82 a barrel.

As in the US, investors in Asia welcomed Friday's news the US economy shed fewer jobs than expected last month. Employers slashed 36,000 jobs last month, better than the 50,000 cuts predicted.

While still up from the 26,000 loss in January, the figure provided evidence the labor market, one of the most watched gauges of economic health, was on the mend.

The unemployment rate was unchanged at 9.7 percent.

"Employment is now very close to stabilizing, although eight months after the recession ended that is hardly a cause for celebration," researchers at Capital Economics said in a note.

Investors were also reassured after French President Nicolas Sarkozy promised financial support for Greece through a debt crisis that has jeopardized all 16 nations in the common currency.

Japan's Nikkei 225 stock average rose 174.95 points, or 1.7 percent, to 10,543.30 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng jumped 598.12 points, or 3.5 percent, to 22,186.09.

South Korea's Kospi added 1.3 percent to 1,638.43.

Elsewhere, Australia's market was up 0.9 percent, Shanghai shares gained 0.8 percent, and Indian stocks were 0.9 percent higher.

In oil, benchmark crude for April delivery rose 44 cents to $81.94 a barrel.

The dollar was lower at 90.40 yen from 90.44 yen. The euro rose to $1.3684 from $1.3629.

Wall Street futures pointed to a modestly higher open in the US Monday.

Friday on Wall Street, the Dow rose 122.06, or 1.2 percent, to 10,584.59, its highest close since Jan. 26. It was the Dow's best point and percentage gain since Feb. 16.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose for a sixth straight day, rising 15.73, or 1.4 percent, to 1,130.76. The Nasdaq composite index added 34.84, or 1.8 percent, to 2,336.31. AP

AIG set to sell insurance unit to MetLife for $15.5B

NEW YORK—AIG WAS CLOSING in on a deal on Sunday to sell its foreign life insurance unit to MetLife Inc. for about $35.5 billion in cash and stock, leaving it with a substantial minority stake in MetLife, sources familiar with the matter said.

MetLife is expected to pay American International Group about $16.8 billion in cash and about $8.7 billion in equity, which includes convertible preferred, common shares and common equivalent securities, for the unit, American Life Insurance Co. (Alico), one of the sources said.

The common stock and securities equivalents or common shares would give AIG about 16 percent ownership in MetLife, while the convertible preferred it expected to be liquidated before it converts, the source said.

With the convertible preferred stock, though, AIG's stake would go above 20 percent, according to the sources.

A deal, which has been approved by both boards, could be announced as soon as Monday, the sources said.

Alico would help MetLife, the largest publicly traded US life insurer, expand its presence in international markets, especially in Japan.

The unit, founded in 1921 and based in Wilmington, Delaware, sells life insurance and retirement products in 70 million customers in 54 countries.

A deal is expected to close by the end of this year, and MetLife estimates it to be accretive by 45 cents per share to 55 cents per share in 2011, excluding one-time costs, one of the sources said.

The deal would be the second major business sale by AIG in a week, and will allow the insurer to repay billions it owes to the US government after a bigger-than-$180 rescue, which has since swelled to $182.3 billion.

The insurer agreed to sell to Japan life insurance unit, American International Assurance (AIA), to Britain's Prudential Plc last Monday for $35.3 billion, the largest insurance deal ever.

Deals for AIA and Alico will allow AIG to repay the government around $112 billion in cash when they close.

AIG, which is nearly 80 percent owned by the US government, declined to comment. MetLife was not available for comment.

The equity component of the purchase price includes about $3 billion in convertible preferred, and the rest in common stock and temporary securities similar to common shares, the sources said.

AIG will hold below 16 percent of MetLife as a result of closing, sources said.

But one of the sources said AIG's actual ownership would never go beyond 14 percent because it could not convert the convertible preferred stock for several years, "and it would end up being liquidated," before that." Reuters

Toyota aims for sales after moving past apologies

NEW YORK—NEW AGE FOR troubled automaker Toyota Motor Corp. are skipping the apologies and easing back into sales pitches—soon, some say.

The campaign pushes the idea that Toyota customers remain loyal, even as the company faces congressional inquiries and some reports that its repairs may not fix the problem.

The new campaign, by Toyota's trade ad agency Saatchi & Saatchi, emphasizes what Toyota says are real satisfied buyers testifying that they still feel safe in their new Toyotas even after months of media-based ridicule and elaborate problems.

"And our own personal experience? There can that we've had have been exceptionally safe," baby boomer Walt Murphy says to one ad. The ad says he and his wife, Donna, bought a Corolla and a Sienna in mid-2009. 20).

The new campaign, which started March 2 and is scheduled to run through April 5, does one thing right, marketing experts say. Troubled brands have to play to their strengths by evoking loyal fans. But some of the existing pros the apologies could make Toyota look like it's mocking safety concerns that are still very real.

People need time to digest bad news, so companies shouldn't try to start selling too soon, said Mike Sheldon, CEO of ad agency Deutsch LA.

"We haven't had that chance to just get through the problem and they're already trying to sell me stuff? I believe that consumers will feel a little confused, like, 'Aren't you still fixing the problem? Why are you trying to sell me a car?'" he said.

Saatchi & Saatchi referred requests for comment on the campaign to Toyota. The automaker's spokespeople didn't respond to requests for comment. AP

Chinese oil output seen slightly up in 2010

BEIJING—CHINA'S CRUDE OIL output will rise by 1-2 percent this year, Vu Baosai, vice president of state-owned China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC), said on Sunday.

The forecast is slightly below a previous estimate of 2 percent given in a CNPC research report, but above the 0.5 percent growth target issued by China's planning ministry, the National Development and Reform Commission, in its 2010 economic plan.

Last year, oil output fell 0.4 percent to 189.49 million tons, or 3.79 million barrels a day, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics.

Jianhua Bunia, head of regional energy research at Mitsubishi Securities, told Reuters on Friday he was expecting about 1.0 percent growth in production this year.

"I believe the struggle with meaningful oil production growth has to do with the difficulties of finding sizable new discoveries to offset the aging fields in Daqing and Liaohe, despite higher oil exploration spending," he said.

"The era of easy oil is over."

China already relies on imported crude oil for more than half its needs and it is expected to become increasingly import-dependent in the next decade. Its annual oil consumption is second only to the United States.

Refineries run by CNPC's subsidiary PetroChina and fellow state-owned giant Sinopec Group, both parents of Hongkong Corp., have ramped up crude oil processing to record levels in the last year.

Sinopec Group said refine about 205 million tons of crude oil in 2010, 11.4 percent more than the 184 million tons processed in 2009. Jia Shaolin, the general manager of the company, was quoted as saying by Xinhua news agency. Reuters

China faces new pressure to let currency rise

BEIJING—CHINA FACES mounting pressure from trading partners to loosen currency controls and is giving signs it may raise the value of the yuan to ease strains on its fast-growing economy.

A stronger yuan may help China's leaders achieve their goal of making the economy more self-sustaining by boosting consumer buying power and reducing dependence on exports and investment. It can suppress China's politically volatile trade surplus, making the flood of foreign money pouring into the economy more manageable.

A change may also help defuse tensions with the United States, Europe and other trading partners that complain an undervalued yuan makes China's exports unfairly cheap and hurts foreign competitors, possibly prolonging the global economic crisis. Some economists themselves are calling for punitive tariffs on Chinese goods if Beijing fails to act.

Analysts say Beijing may allow the yuan to rise against the dollar before the middle of this year. But they say any increase will be gradual, and the fear of will be very slow and gradual, without an immediate impact on trade," said Nicholas Consonery, an analyst in Hong Kong for Eurasia Group, a consulting firm.

On Friday, Premier Wen Jiabao said in a speech to China's legislature that the yuan would be kept "basically stable" at an "appropriate and balanced" level this year, though he gave no explanation of what that would mean.

Beijing tied the yuan to the dollar for decades, but broke that link in 2005 and allowed it to rise by about 20 percent through late 2008. The government maintained the broken dollar peg during the crisis to help China's exports recover from a slump in global demand wiped out millions of Chinese factory jobs.

The United States and Europe downplayed currency complaints as they sought to get Beijing to help revive the global economy. But facing pressure to create jobs, they and governments as far flung as Brazil have renewed demands for China to act.

President Barack Obama vowed to study leniency to "get much tougher" in trade disputes with China and to press for an end to currency regimes that he said depress export prices and put US companies at a disadvantage.

Last year's US trade deficit with China was $227 billion, down 11 percent from 2008 but among the highest ever. The 27-nation European Union reported a $2 billion euro ($266 billion) deficit with China for the first half of 2009. AP

AN EMPLOYEE holds Chinese yuan notes at the Bank of Taiwan head office in Taipei. China will continue to reform its exchange rate policy in a gradual manner, Commerce Minister Chen Deming said. AFP/FILE

US consumers said to shake off recession blues

WASHINGTON—THE US CONsumer may be staging a mini-comeback.

Despite the formidable combination of high unemployment, wings credit terms and frayed confidence, there are some signs that spending is on the upswing.

While that doesn't mean consumption is soaring back to pre-recession levels, it suggests that still-terribly economic recovery is gaining some stronger support.

High-end retail stores, including Neiman Marcus and Saks Inc, posted stronger sales in February Powder AG's year-to-date US sales are up 8.8 percent last year's.

Figures due on Friday are expected to show US retail sales dipping slightly in February. Sales probably rose, excluding vehicles, which were hurt by Toyota's recalls.

That would be a remarkably robust showing considering that big East Coast cities New York, Philadelphia and Washington were hamstrung by snowstorms that kept shoppers away from stores.

Richard Hastings, consumer strategist at Sewport Beach, California-based Global Hunter Securities, said retailers were seeing a flurry of demand after two recession-ravaged years, and for good reason.

Bleak market gains have lifted household wealth. Job losses have slowed and falling prices for big ticket items such as flat-screen televisions have enticed buyers, he said.

Hastings divides consumers into two categories...those who are out of work or underemployed and those who have jobs. In the worst prior in the job market, nearly 20 percent fell into the first category.

"That gives you 80 percent in work with," he said.

Thanks to government tax breaks and retail price cuts, those among the 80 percent have more buying power, and it appears they are beginning to use it.

Hastings has been tracking a nascent recovery in discretionary spending that began in November with a pick-up in demand for home furnishings. The next stage would be growth in such items as furniture and appliances, and those are the categories he would be watching in Friday's report.

Investors seem to have caught on to retail's rebound.

The Standard & Poor's retailing index jumped 50 percent in the past year, outperforming the broader S&P 500 index, which is up 73 percent over that period.

A stronger US consumer would be welcome news to US trading partners, particularly China, which relies on exports for growth. China's February trade figures are due to Wednesday, and economists polled by Reuters are looking for a nearly 20 percent year-over-year jump.

Some of the US consumer revival can be traced to the stock market's recovery, which has helped push a gaping hole in household wealth.

In the depth of the recession, to the first quarter of 2009, household wealth was down $10 trillion from the pre-recession peak of $64.5 trillion. Reuters

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LOGAN with wife Joe and their Citroen, which they consider their "baby"

A banker's passion for flying

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

IF HE WERE NOT A BANKER, Ronald Logan, head of the Personal Finance Services for HSBC Philippines, would have wanted to be a commercial pilot. On the other hand, he's proud of his successful banking career, as it affords him to indulge in his passion for flying.

Back in the '80s, his wife Ann told Logan he was a workaholic and that he needed to take his mind off banking. She enrolled him in a trial flying lesson in Edinburgh, Scotland. Since then, he's been flying high—literally and figuratively.

HOW THEY STAY FIT

"The lessons were a breeze. 'It's like driving a car; you turn left or right or push forward. Basic flying is easy, it's the other things you need to learn as a pilot—using the radio, how to read maps and navigate. You need to practice your landing. Every landing is different. It all depends on the wind, the temperature, if the runway is concrete, grass or gravel, if the plane is heavy or light, the number of passengers. It's like learning how to reverse a car into a tight park space. You can't do it unless you practice," he says.

Spectacular scenery

On his first flight, he flew from Edinburgh airport and saw the iconic landmarks, the dramatic landscape and the hills by.

"The scenery was spectacular. It made me want to learn more," says Logan.

When he was posted to Sydney, he eventually bought a property outside of Adelaide, South Australia. Aldinga, south of Adelaide, had a good flying school and an airfield. On weekends, the couple would indulge in their passion.

"For those 15 years I never could have imagined," says Logan. He's crossed Australia, flying from Adelaide to Sydney, Brisbane, Cairns, the bush or Ayers Rock. One of his best memories was flying from England to Paris across the English Channel.

"It was the first time we flew to a foreign country and we spoke to French air traffic controllers," he says. He's also flown in Belgium and the Netherlands.

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A banker's passion for flying

From page B1

LOGAN in Alkinga, South Australia

Big moment

It was a crushing moment for Logan when he was transferred to China. Although he was excited about his new posting, it also meant leaving their plane behind and flying only when they were on holiday.

We in China, he managed to fly somebody's plane in an air show there. Xuhui in Guangzhou. The flight was two years in the planning stage. The challenge was finding a small aircraft, since there were few private planes and getting a Chinese pilot license was easy.

"You can get it even if you only speak English," says Logan.

The big moment came when the Logans purchased a Cirrus five years ago.

"It was a big thing, like getting our first child. We looked after the plane too much and overpolished it. It's a modern plane that goes fast at 300 knots, but we do more than 200 knots [max]," says Logan.

However, this hobby is not cheap. "Neither is having children. But we treat our plane [more] with children, it cries to like a child. It needs to be fed with fuel, it can get temperamental. The gas is more expensive than normal fuel. It's like a car, the maintenance like the engine check is every 50 hours. You replace the parts after many hours. You need a good mechanic to look after it. The insurance is more expensive than a car. On the other hand, you want a safe aircraft to operate."

Because of advanced propulsion in flight, Logan has flown through rough weather.

"There were days when the weather unexpectedly got worse. We flew through bumps or rain, that we're cautious; if the weather is not reasonable, we don't fly. It's just not fun."

Fit for flying

Asked how flying promotes his wellbeing, Logan says: "It's a release for us in the sense way people are passionate about diving or having a yacht. You must be fit for flying. You must drink alcohol. And you just don't jump and fly. There is a process. You must plan."

He adds that one of the rewards is meeting all kinds of people, from farmers to doctors, who share the interest. Logan says that to Australia, farmers who live in remote places own an aircraft.

"We've stayed in the middle of nowhere and just looked under the stars."

The biggest reward is developing personal closeness.

"Instead of doing activities such as golf or swimming or meeting up with people, I get involved in studying this hobby. It takes discipline to make time to read the books and go out to the airfield to fly. It takes me mind off work. I like golf, but it's the fairways, my mind is still thinking about what I will do next week or how to make more revenues happen. When you're in the aircraft, you concentrate on flying, navigation and radio work. It becomes more absorbing. That was one of the attractions."

Divination, clairvoyance—they're in the Bible, too

INNER AWAKENESS

Ivonne T. Llamzon

A FRIEND OF MY WIFE TEXTED HER this followup question from the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and she asked for my comment:

"#2116 says: different of divination are to be rejected: recourse to Satanism/demons, conjuring up the dead, or other practices falsely supposed to 'unveil' the future, consulting horoscope, astrology, palm reading, interpretation of omens and lots. The phenomena of clairvoyance and recourse to mediums all conceal a desire for power over time, history and in the last analysis, other human beings, as well as a wish to conciliate hidden powers. They contradict the honor, respect, and loving fear that we owe to God alone."

Before I comment on the above quotation, let me define the terms we are using. The word "catechism," if I remember it correctly, refers to a summation of the principles and doctrines of a religion or to the form of questions and answers, intended to educate and inform its followers.

In other words, a catechism outlines the beliefs and teachings of a particular religion, such as Christianity. As such, it is expected to be followed by its members and followers.

In matters of faith, there can be no compromise. Either one believes or he does not. In all Catholics are taught to just follow blindly its teachings and should not question Church authorities.

History proves that questioning Church teachings can be dangerous. Galileo tried to convince the Church before that the sun revolved around the earth and was promptly arrested by the Inquisition and threatened by excommunication, even death, unless he retracted. He reluctantly did—although he was later proven correct all along—rather than lose his life over such an issue.

At another time, a Catholic monk named Martin Luther questioned the absolute authority of the Pope, and it split the monolithic church into warring sects.

Personal opinion

In my advice is, if you believe completely in the Church teachings, and you are a member in good standing, then you should not put forward contradicting questions no matter how logical they are.

But I sometimes myself down part-Catholic, I believe the essential in Catholicism is the teachings of any religion to be valid and true. All religions, for example, teach that "We should do good and avoid evil." Who can quarrel with that?

But I want to make it clear that what I say in the following paragraphs are my personal opinion and need not be accepted by Church followers.

I do not and cannot logically agree completely with the above quotation. I agree with it only partially. Why? Because it is inconsistent with what can find in the Catholic Bible itself. The quotation rejects all forms of divination or telling the future by any means. But didn't Jesus Christ himself foretell the future when he told Peter: "Before the cock crows you will deny me three times?"

And again, during the Last Supper, he said in the bewildered apostles: "One of you is going to betray me." If that is not divination or foretelling the future, then what do you call it?

However, I fully agree that one should not venture or call on the dead to tell the future or even just to talk to them out of curiosity. I have always been consistent in this stand. There are certainly dangers in contacting the dead. But if the dead is earthbound and needs to convey a message to the living, then, to my mind, it is alright to communicate with the dead, otherwise it will not find peace of mind.

Once the message has been conveyed, the departed is usually heard from no more. He or she will be at peace.

Good intentions

Although I don't fully believe in them, I don't think there's anything inherently wrong with the practices involving mediums/psychics. Many of our ancestors are good and we are not completely dependent on them in making decisions. There are many books used to find some deeper or hidden meaning in life.

Clairvoyance simply means the ability to see or become aware of things that are not normally visible to the naked eye. For example, seeing distant places without being there, or seeing spirits such as angels, saints, etc. There are people whose natural clairvoyant abilities are far above the ordinary; it is part of their personality.

Even Jesus Christ practiced his clairvoyant vision when he told the Samaritan woman at the well that she has had five husbands and her present partner was not her husband, either. How did he know that, if he did not have the power of clairvoyance?

You might say "But Jesus could do that because he is God, whereas we are human."

But Jesus himself said in John 14:12: "All the works that I have done you can do, and much more than these."

So what's so strange about these practices? Using them does not contravene the Bible. We believe, respect and honor Him for me not to God." On the contrary, they are merely in obedience to what Jesus said we could do, as quoted in John.

The next "Inner Mind Development" seminar will be held on March 13-14, Saturday-Sunday, from 9 a.m.–5 p.m. at Rm. 208 Prime Plaza 1 Cond., Legaspi St., Greenhill, Makati. Call 833-7295; telefax 833-9886; e-mail jayne@ecoenglishcom.com.

How to make sure summer doesn't delay your fitness goals

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By Mitch Felipe Mendoza
Contributor

WEIGHT LOSS DELAY AND AN EXERCISE performance plateau can be your concern during this time of the year since you are not exercising as much, or you are consuming more calories during the day because of the weather.

Instead of gaining extra weight, delaying weight loss or reducing your physical activities this summer, be determined to set summer months to pursue your fitness activities and healthy eating practices.

First of all, you have to identify the primary reasons you are consuming more calories and burning less this summer. Then make an effort to practice the following alternative solutions to your "hot weather" excuses.

Ordering high-calorie refreshing drinks. The hot days, especially in the afternoon, might encourage you to go out and buy refreshing snacks and drinks like fruit-ade, ice cream, powdered fruit shakes and cold sodas. A refreshing snack or drink may contain 300 to 400 calories per serving depending on its size, ingredients and add-ons. Easy to resist that a snack should contain less calories than a full meal.

To avoid buying high-calorie drinks, always hydrate yourself with cold water throughout the day. You can always bring your water bottle to work or to the gym or to the beach for shopping. Look for bottles that can keep water cold for a day; they can be bought at leading department stores and sports shops.

If you really want a cold drink, you can always control the calories by making your own. For example, using your blender, on ice cold mango shake, consisting of half a ripe mango and a slice of mango with ice for milk and low-calorie sweetener, contains less than 100 calories.

Unplanned beach outings on weekends. Summer may tempt you to pursue weekend beach outings with your family or friends. Recently, this season has been a challenge for me and my clients since unplanned weekend getaways cause them to eat more and exercise less than on a regular weekend. According to their journals, they can eat 20 to 30 percent more than their usual weekend food intake because of more drinking and more snacks available for the family and friends outings.

A study published in "Obesity" shows that weekend behaviors play a great role in one's weight gain or slow weight loss, due to eating more and resting less on a weekend than on a regular day. The results suggest that, on these high-risk circumstances, individuals should do self-control planning such as what to eat and refrain physical activities to do on weekends.

The best thing to do during immediate weekend getaways is to plan in advance what you should eat (more fruits, vegetables, lean unsweetened foods and drinks) and explore possible exercise levels (walking, swimming, jogging, biking, or creating fun family games that will make you move more without thinking of exercise.

Hot weather as an excuse to delay exercise. Most 30-minute walking workouts in the morning or afternoon can burn three to seven more calories than a 60-minute walking workout. Also, if you can't finish your distance training not because you say you can't tolerate the heat after 7 a.m.

Start to adjust your sleeping time as you can adjust your exercise earlier, or try exercising in the evening, aside from dumping your exercise schedule, you can choose sports like swimming instead of outdoor cycling or running. Or go to the gym, which is fully air-conditioned, and attend group fitness classes or use the machines. Reward yourself with a cool shower at the end of your exercise sessions.

Most exercisers, especially those who commute, will consider the discomfort of exercising under the hot weather just to go to the gym or badminton court. In this case, check out your preferred home workout, like exercising with your workout videos or performing your body weight resistance training routine. Exercising at home can even help you save on travel expenses.

Having a vacation-minded set. Within the dedicated to summer vacation and their Week but approaching, you might be developing a vacation mind-set. If you want to embrace a healthy lifestyle long-term, don't anticipate, much less take, a long break from eating healthy and exercising your physical activities.

There might be a change to your planned activity routines, schedule and even food intake, but as early as now, you should be able to plan for it. A simple strategy to avoid dropping your healthy lifestyle during vacations and holidays is to include your whole family in planning your activities.

It is also a good idea to explain to your family about your fitness and health goals and how much you want them as well to practice a healthy lifestyle.

Plan and discuss how to avoid eating fatty junk foods in front of the TV while watching your favorite movies, what to buy during weekend grocery shopping and what type of healthy but delicious foods should be served during family reunions. For planned activities, plan an outdoor adventure vacation with your family or involve your kids to summer sports while you are also doing your own activities.

E-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com

New running shoe design helps minimize injuries

By Anne B. Jambora

THE DAYS WHEN WOMEN'S running shoes were simply versions of their male counterparts are over. Japanese brand Asics revolutionizes its running shoe line by launching sex-specific joints designed to minimize and/or prevent injuries commonly experienced by women runners.

"This modification is even more important now since running events all over the world have consistently shown to have more women runners than men," said Neil Bryant, managing director of Genie Trading, local distributor of Asics.

Bryant said running's impact on the female body, according to the 1995 year study by Asics, differs greatly from that of the male body. A woman's muscles do not react to impact in the same way as a man's; the wider female hips also make women more prone to injuries.

The study on the physiological and structural differences between the two sexes aims to improve running performance, comfort and safety for both sexes. But since attention has been given to male athletes in the past, Asics has chosen to fashion sex-specific shoes that synch well with the female anatomy.

Solyte technology

The footbed combining, for instance, incorporates the Solyte technology that gives more tension to each stride and has far better impact absorption. Since female runners are frequently afflicted with Achilles tendonitis, a Flex Thrust rate raises the heel gradient by 3 mm to relieve the load that causes the tension on the Achilles.

Since the woman's each height changes throughout the month as estrogen levels fluctuate, Asics developed the Space Transit system to give the foot flexibility and support it needs as it goes through a gait cycle.

"If you run, say 42 km, the last thing you'd want to worry about is the comfort of your feet. With shoes specific to women, all you really have to do is see what you were on there to do in the first place," it becomes a battle of the mind," Bryant said.

Bryant says percent of Asics shoes feature the gel technology. The gel absorbs the impact and protects runners from injuries, said Tetsuya Kashimura of Asics Japan.

"Injuries are usually caused by the impact of the body as the foot strikes the ground. Asics now has the technology that will benefit both sexes," Kashimura said.

Asics will soon open its flagship store in Greenhills 3, Ayala Center, Makati this May. Bryant said the shop will be equipped with the latest technology to help runners make their journey as comfortable as possible. A Foot Scan II will measure the right length and width of the foot. Running gait will also be measured on a special treadmill.

Asics also launched its models GEL-Kayano 16, GT-1150 and DS2 Stinger 11. The GEL-Kayano 16 enhances support and stability; GT-2150 is for cushioning and durability; while the DS2 Stinger reduces landing and retraction.

AMIL Bryant, managing director of Genie Trading, with Tetsuya Kashimura of Asics Japan

FEET are scanned to get precise measurements.

How raw food and vegetables saved chef Cheloy's life

IN THE REALM OF FAITH, MIRACLES never cease, especially if you believe. But think of the greater possibilities that can happen if you act on your belief. The story of Cheloy Ignacio is living proof.

At the age of 31, Cheloy, a young pregnant mother, lost her full-term baby. Unknown to her, she was suffering from high blood pressure. One night, she felt her baby girl kick so hard, but she didn't attribute it to anything serious. After all, she was so young. What could be possibly go wrong?

But the worst of nightmares happened two days later. When she was due to deliver, she noticed that her baby had stopped moving in her belly. The infant had died in her womb.

After a battery of tests, it was discovered that she was suffering from hypertension (blood pressure: 280/110), diabetes, high cholesterol and kidney problems. For the next 10 years, Cheloy battled depression and survived on her food, pink food and medications.

One morning while watching TV, she saw Dr. Doreen Gamboa-Yan Shibuya, a naturopathic physician and president of the Vegetarian Association of the Philippines. One particular woman in Dr. Gamboa-Yan's talk caught her attention.

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

"If you are sick, there is hope," he said. Cheloy soon became a vegan and adopted a regimen that normalized her blood profile in three days.

Raw food chef

Today, Cheloy is a certified raw food chef. The health food convert is no longer just a follower. After studying with chef Alyssa Cabral in Boracay, Manoucher Yamini, she decided to return to Manila to share her wonderful life-changing story.

Armed with a library of nutritious cookbooks and an arsenal of magical concoctions, she can whip up a mock potato salad using glycoma (sayboraca), avocado and tomatoes), a cannelloni (lasagna) in a delicious zesty sauce, a pizza made with flax seed and walnut dough, plus tomatoes and olives as toppings.

Chef Cheloy spots a 10-inch waistline (where once it was 38) and has since shed 20 lbs. The astonishing result? Not years off her face and body. All the hassles of her love affair with vegetables. She's considering raw food cuisine lessons on March 13-14. Call 0977222, 9464185 or 0920-5509819.

Better yet, have a unique and intimate dining experience in the comfort of her own condo at Fair Tower, Ortigas Center. For packets of love, eight nutritious, experience a different kind of "chef will definitely cleanse your palate, detoxify your system, rejuvenate your body and lift your spirits. Promise!

Healthy habits

Curious to see what a difference it would make if you laid an extra egg, noodle in your meal or adopted a healthier lifestyle? Well, beginning today, try to do the following.

Relax up. Introduce more vegetables to your diet: lettuce, cabbage, cucumber, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, asparagus. Have an easy sugar-fruit recipe to start with:

1 ripe banana
1 green apple
½ green bell pepper—diced

½ cup papaya, deseeded

Blend in a juicer. Drink up every time you are hungry. If you fill up your tummy with this green juice formula, you will start shedding off excess weight.

Salad à la carte. Make your own salad, but go easy on the dressing. If you can survive with an orange-balsamic-mustard-olive oil dressing, then your weight will drop immediately.

Exercise. Join a group of friends who work out regularly, whether it's badminton, biking or running. The secret is daily, consistent workout.

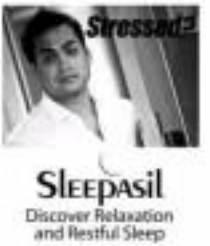
Keep early nights. You will lose your timing if you stay up late every day. Beg off from lately social commitments. Or simply appear socially by staying for 30 minutes per engagement.

Silky skin mask

½ ripe avocado (chilled)
1 tbsp fresh milk
Mix and mash. Apply to entire face. Leave on for 10 minutes. Rinse with cool water. Your face will feel smooth. This is also a great hair and body conditioner.

Today's affirmation: "My life abounds with happiness."

Love and light!



Iyengar Yoga teacher holds Manila workshops

SENIOR Iyengar Yoga teacher Rajni Mehra

SENIOR IYENGAR YOGA TEACHER RAJNI Mehra will hold a series of workshops for both beginners and more experienced students on March 29-30, at the Iyengar Yoga Center Manila (IYCM).

Iyengar yoga is a form of yoga originated by living yoga master BKS Iyengar, which emphasizes proper alignment and precision in the execution of asanas or poses, as well as the conscientious study of breathwork or pranayama.

Mehra has been studying directly under BKS Iyengar since 1979. She has been teaching yoga for the Light on Yoga Research Trust in Mumbai since 1987, and is the editor of Yoga Rahasya, the quarterly publication of the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune, India, where BKS Iyengar lives and continues to share his knowledge today.

This is an ideal opportunity for beginner students to discover yoga, and more advanced practitioners, to refine their practice with guidance in this disciplined and thorough style.

Basic classes, open to all, will be held on March 29 (9, 12 noon) 2 p.m., and March 27, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Fee is P1,000 per session or P7,000 for all four sessions. Advanced classes, open to practitioners with prior exposure to Iyengar yoga who can do independent shoulderstands and headstands, will be held March 29 (6, 8-9 p.m., and March 30, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., followed by a restorative class at 3-5 p.m.

A pranayama class will be held March 27, 3-5:30 p.m. Fee is P1,000 per session or P13,750 for all six sessions.

Reservations are on a first come-first served basis. A practitioner may opt to attend all or just one of the workshops. Iyengar Yoga Center Manila is at 25/F RMS Tower, 6801 Ayala Ave., Makati. Call 7534495 or 0917-8239711; e-mail info@iyogacenter-manila.com; or visit www.iyogacenter-manila.com.

RUGS COMMUNITY SLEEWANCE THEIR WAY TO FITNESS. Personal trainer Paolo Sison (second from left) and "Lifeagony Kay-Sandy" host Brenda Rosa (right) lead some 30 women in a 15-minute workout session called "Sindhaus: Discover way to fitness" in Barangay Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City. The event is part of the community health awareness program by Natural Quality Corp., developer and marketer of herbal-based natural food supplements that includes Ampalaya Plus, Ampalaya Dalire Herbal Tea, Glenda, Endurance and Revalin. The company is sponsoring the construction of ten houses to be built in Barangay Pinagbuhatan through Habitat for Humanity. Ten of the houses will be dedicated to Marjorie Navarro/Cara Gruno. Prior the event, Watsons hosted a short talk on stay fit and administered BMI testing and blood pressure check for the participants. Sison and Rosa taught the woman how to do basic hip-hop, Latin, and club steps. Joining them on stage were students from Bureau who volunteered event hours at the Habitat site.

INQUIRER mobile news

INQUIRER BREAKING NEWS: Two separate vehicular accidents, a few minutes apart, causes traffic jam along southbound lane of C-5 in Pasig City, says Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Edna Boone-G. Velarde

Cobra Starship performs at Ayala Malls

COBRA STARSHIP IS A FIVE-MEMBER SYNTH-POP-ROCK BAND from New York, plays at the following Ayala Malls: Trinoma on March 23; Greenbelt 3 Park on March 26; and Alabang Town Center on March 27. The group has released three albums: "While the City Sleeps, We Rule the Streets" (2006); "¡Viva La Cobra!" (2007) which was produced by Pull Out Boy's Patrick Stump; and "Hot Mess" (2009) which contains the singles "Good Girls Go Bad" and the title track.

Willie, Lady Gaga still rule the charts

THE TOP-SELLING ALBUMS in the Philippines for the week Feb. 22-28, based on Odyssey Music & Video-store chain's confidential sales reports:

Overall

1) "The Fame Monster," Lady Gaga, MCA Music; 2) "Starless (Platinum Edition)," Taylor Swift, MCA Music; 3) "Kiss Me Nga," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 4) "Super Show 2," Super Junior, Universal Records; 5) "2010 Grammy

odyssey MUSIC & VIDEO

Lil. Wayne, latest rap star to be jailed

Rappers and jail: A ritual

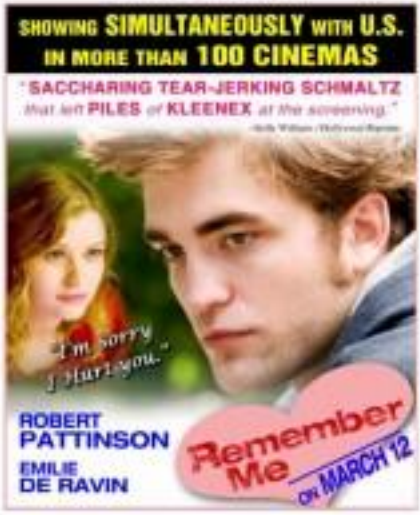
ATLANTA—IT'S A ritual that seems to play out at least once a year in the rap community: A superstar faces a criminal charge, and more often than not, is locked up at the height of his or her wealth and fame.

Lil Wayne is the latest example. Last week, he was to be sentenced on a weapons charge, and will likely face one year behind bars. He is one of many such popular figures, a triumphant returning, top-selling superstar whose chief rhymes performance through rap, pop and music comedy, work.

Long list

He joins a long list of rap stars who have gotten caught up in the criminal justice system. Perhaps the most prominent was Tupac Shakur, who went to jail in 1995 as he was on the verge of superstardom. It kept the question: After all those years, why are hip-hop's top stars still finding themselves on the path to prison?

"People seem to think they are smarter than the system or that person's free is not their here," says Chaka Zulu, co-founder of Lobaria' Everything Bar Brass label. "Some people say: 'Oh no, that'll never happen to me.' Or



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GALLERIA

1 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
2 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
3 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
4 UP IN THE AIR
5 THE FOURTH KIND
6 ALICE IN WONDERLAND (Digital 3D)
7 COP OUT
8 PIRANA
9 THE ROAD
10 THE PRODUCERS

MANILA | **METRO EAST**

1 COP OUT
2 THE FOURTH KIND
3 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
4 UP IN THE AIR
5 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
6 THE ROAD
7 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF

1 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
4 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
5 THE ROAD
6 COP OUT
7 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
8 THE FOURTH KIND

NOVALICHES | **FORUM ROBINSONS**

1 COP OUT
2 THE ROAD
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4 ALICE IN WONDERLAND

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2 COP OUT
3 IT'S COMPLICATED
4 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
3 DEAR JOHN
4 VALENTINE'S DAY
5 ALICE IN WONDERLAND

DASMARIÑAS | **STARMILLS**

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 COP OUT
4 THE REBOUND

1 DEAR JOHN
2 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
3 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
4 PERCY JACKSON & THE OLYMPIANS
5 COP OUT
6 ALICE IN WONDERLAND

IMUS | **ANGELES**

1 THE FOURTH KIND
2 COP OUT
3 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
4 ALICE IN WONDERLAND

1 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
2 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
3 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
4 COP OUT

TACLOBAN | **DUMAGUETE**

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
3 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE

BACOLOD | **ILOILO**

1 COP OUT
2 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
3 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
4 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
5 CASE 39
6 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE

1 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
2 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
3 DEAR JOHN
4 COP OUT
5 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
6 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF

GENSAN

1 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY
2 WHITE OUT
3 FROM PARIS WITH LOVE
4 SOLOMON KANE

ILOCOS NORTE

1 ALICE IN WONDERLAND
2 PERCY JACKSON & OLYMPIANS: THE LIGHTNING THIEF
3 MISS YOU LIKE CRAZY

A

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- Jordan Arabella, blogger

"THE RED SHOES is original and thus, effortlessly engaging. ...raises the bar for contemporary love stories..."
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Willie . . .

From page D1

Nominees," Various Artists, Polyfunk Records; 6) "I Am Ur Boi: Ost Of Tv & Movie Themes," Various Artists, Star Records; 7) "Runaway Revisited: The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan," Christian Bautista, Universal Records; 8) "Rendition Of The Soul," Sitti, Warner Music; 9) "Sublimed To Acoustic 2," Princess Velez Music; 10) "Glee: The Music, Vol. 1," Glee Cast, Sony Music

OPM

1) "Bato Ha Higit," Willie Revillame, Star Records; 2) "I Am Ur Boi: Ost Of Tv & Movie Themes," Various Artists, Star Records; 3) "Runaway Revisited: The Love Songs of Jose Mari Chan," Christian Bautista, Universal Records; 4) "Rendition Of The Soul," Sitti, Warner Music; 5) "Sublimed To Acoustic 2," Princess Velez Music; 6) "Bato," Noel Cabangon, Universal Records; 7) "Sitti," Sitti, Star Records; 8) "OPM Love Classics," Jay-R, Universal Records; 9) "Sa 3," Martin Nievera & Gary Valenciano, Universal Records; 10) "Acoustic (Live)," Jaya & Kuya, Alpha Records

Rappers and jail . . .

From page D1

just got caught slipping."

TI, another icon of rap's top sellers, reported to a federal prison in 2009 for his conviction on weapons charges. He spent time in an Arkansas prison and is currently in a halfway house in Georgia.

Lil Wayne joins a group of rappers with legal woes over the past year, from Gucci Mane to Jeezy to music producer Shawty Redd, who faces a charge of murder in Georgia.

In the history of hip-hop, other prominent rappers such as Ol' Kirk, Shakur, Lil' Kim, Suge Knight, Remy Ma, Beanie Sigel, Mystikal and C-Murder have spent a few months to several years in prison. Snoop Dogg was acquitted of murder; Diddy faced jail time but he was acquitted in 2001 on bribery and weapons charges stemming from a club shooting. His protege, Mase, wasn't so lucky and was convicted in the same case and sentenced to 10 years; he was recently deported after his release from prison.

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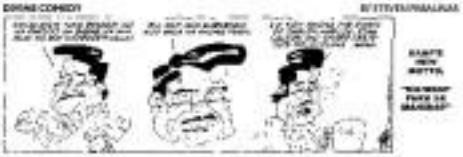


BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

TULDOK BY MARA COLL

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

BIKO MACHINE BY MARK ABERIN

MARRIED LADDIN BY JIM TOOMEY

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY You're a thinker who is not sensitive and you're curious about everything around you. You're also powerful, and you have a strong need to be quietly the dominant object in your personal relations. You're very public. You have a lot of contacts, friends, romantic partners, and a wide circle of acquaintances. Sometimes you prefer to be with only a few close friends and lovers. Sometimes you're a family animal and sometimes you prefer to be alone. Birthday twins: Actor Jeff Daniels, singer Jessica Simpson, actor Jason Lee, and actor Jason Bateman.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You make an excellent impression on important people today, especially concerning your career and VIPs. This motivates you to be a strong leader.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Be on the lookout for unexpected romance or changes in your partnership situation. Be open to a surprise. Be willing to see something from a new perspective.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You can benefit from the wealth and resources of other folks. Sometimes public relations, groups and favors make this a busy day.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) This is an excellent day to talk to partners and close friends. Sometimes love is your most profitable pick. Keep in regular touch with a friend who is a natural communicator.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) You want to get better organized at work and at home. You want to repair relationships and make arrangements with more efficiency. Do yourself as well as others a favor.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) This is a fun-loving, playful, flirtatious day. You're in the mood for romance. Be careful with your words. Make sure you're not misunderstood. Be open to a fun gift, sometimes you're ready to find out your heart's true love.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Entertain or relax at home. Daily contacts and meetings at home will be educational and informative, especially those about new ventures and different activities.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Your relationships with children, or perhaps a romantic interaction, might disappoint you today! Don't take it to heart. Be sensitive and flexible. Enjoy your time. Communications with others, especially siblings, are upbeat.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) This is a good day for business and commerce. It's also an excellent day to have fun with your kids and spend time playing. You're looking on the future with confidence.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) You are especially lucky today. This is a good day to get your finances in order. Your instincts are strong, so trust yourself. Because you're well-organized and friendly toward associates.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Solitude is wonderful concentration will please you today. You want a chance to tune in your thoughts about romance, money and cosplay assistance.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) A conversation with a female friend or acquaintance will be a pleasant exchange for you today. Share your dreams and hopes for the future with someone in one of her feedback is helpful.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

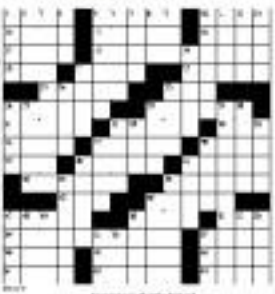
Fill the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3×3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs visit www.sudoku.com

Conceptis Sudoku

		3	7	4				5
2					6	9	3	
							7	
		4			7	3	1	
				6				
	6	9	4				7	
		5						
		7	1	6				2
4					3	2	8	

Difficulty: Easy ★★

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



DARBY Concepcion was the only male graduate in Maryland College's batch '96.After Gonzaga spoke(sent to classmate's mom.

Celebs' moments when they came marching in

MARCH IS THE MONTH WHEN graduates come marching in. I'll never forget the moment I told my mom that I had good and bad news: what I was about my graduation with a degree in MS Linguistics from UP Diliman. "Good news! I'm graduating cum laude, ma," I exclaimed. "Bad news is, I'm pregnant!"

You can just imagine how my mom reacted. It was like a scene straight out of a telenovela.

I asked some celebs about their unforgettable graduation story. Come to think of it, life is a series of graduations from one stage to another. May we all learn what we have to learn and pass on the lessons.

Dolly Ann Carvajal

DOLLY Ann Carvajal

DARBY CONCEPCION: "I did not march during my college graduation because I was drunk. I was the only male graduate student in Maryknoll College in 1996. We were only 13 male students out of 1,500 at that time."

MERRY COLEMAN: "I volunteered as an usherette for graduation in 2007. I was by the door to the left side of the stage, looking at the new grads. As the program was ending, I noticed that the lead usher was walking in for a final marching. In my rush to get an usher's bar seat, I didn't notice the slope by the doorway. To my horror, I slid and fell on my butt! Good thing the audience had their attention on stage and hardly anybody noticed. I stood up, dusted my skirt and with my head held high, I marched on."

JULIA GOMEZ-JOSE: "During my high school graduation, we used to call our classmates by their last names. During the ceremony one patriotic boy's seated beside me spoke in alphabetical order. My surname and I were teasing my classmate who was seated three rows in front of us. To get her attention we kept calling her "Bulelit" which was her nickname. We didn't know that her mom kept looking at us. We apologized to her mom."

ROSSKOCK PALILEY: "During my high school graduation, my Physics teacher didn't allow me to sit and join my classmates in the ceremony. She made me believe that she wasn't sure if I passed her subject. I only got up on stage when my name was called. All throughout, I smiled at the right side of the stage hoping to hear my name called. It was traumatic and I pitied me. I don't understand what she was up to. It was torture. And my principal knew but he was kinda powerless to help me. That's why when I graduated in Ateneo, he, my bro and friends, I chose Physics and got a grade of 1."

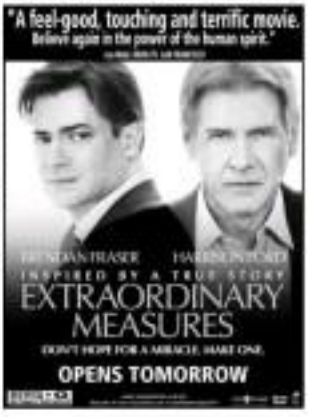
CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA: "In my high school graduation, I was so proud to receive the Christian Character award."

MEL PO: "When I went up on stage to receive my College Leadership Award, my classmates cheered. And that's how I found out my diploma, it was just rubber! Ipu pro, thank to this rubber-faked after pamasa or bayo lang ibinigay yun para di magdadramahin ang magsilang sa kanyang graduation. Bayo wala akong mali para ang classmates ko nagpalakpak. Yun pala ibibigay ang original copy nun next after graduation!"

* * *

The first 13 runners of Christian Bautista and Angelu, "Love at Last," turned out to be a huge hit. Tickets were sold out for the pair's Valentine's date at the Cardinal Rosario Country Club 88 in Cabiao, Nueva Ecija. The show's producers confirmed the positive response of the casino management and promised to do a series of repeat next year.

E-mail: sunstarphoto@sunstar.com.ph; kel@yahoo.com



PLDT HanepBuhay brings good business sense to Pasay, Calamba and Cebu

PLDT

HANEP BUHAY SET

UNLI CALLS, MAXI KITA!

Running a business is 10% luck and 90% hard work as Herminio Vargas of Cebu City learned. The owner of Labug Glass Supply also found out that it pays to have good communications to make things happen.

Fortunately, he found a reliable partner in the PLDT HanepBuhay Set and realized soon enough how valuable reliable phone lines were especially for a bustling small scale business like his.

He discovered that PLDT HanepBuhay was a perfect starter kit that allows micro business owners to enjoy unlimited local calls using PLDT landlines. For a P1,500 installation fee, he got a business landline plus Smart wireless landline SIM, for free – a Call 49 SIM and two Landline Plus Prepaid SIMs with P100 Load Card each.

Like other aspiring entrepreneurs who availed of the product, Vargas experienced huge savings which translated to bigger income. Now, he has enough times to count vital points in his glass operations. More importantly, he is able to make and receive calls directly with his suppliers and customers.

Having a PLDT HanepBuhay Set is a wise way to build a business. Learn from Herminio and the growing number of happy HanepBuhay subscribers.

"PLDT HanepBuhay helps us stay more connected to our customers. It helps us find out other shop needs when they want it. We talk to them personally and settle on a first-name basis and most of our regulars."

Stephen Tan and Meg Santiago,
resource owners
Pasaggui Bird, Pasay City

"Sa aming ng PLDT HanepBuhay natin nan tatao ng nasina ang pang staff or organo ang requirements ng tinanto or nakukuha, nasina ang mapamadang halangan sa mula ang ng isang area dinan sinan ngat kung aming dapat gamit."

Annaspher Pundaan,
manual benefit management
Dalandan St., Pasay City

"Halos na nanggaman ng PLDT ang aming pangangailangan sa komunikasyon. Hindi pa kasing kung walang mga caller agarin dito sa Calamba at mga kasing pwed. Di kami nagkamali sa pagpili sa PLDT."

Theresa Lamberto,
management staff
Parian, Calamba City

CALL 171

CALL 171

Sa PLDT HanepBuhay, siyak ang unanan!
Dahil unlimited ang calls, mas malaki ang savings at kita!

PLDT